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Second Edition.

THE

RIGHTS OF NATURE,

AGAINST THE

USURPATIONS OF ESTABLISHMENTS.

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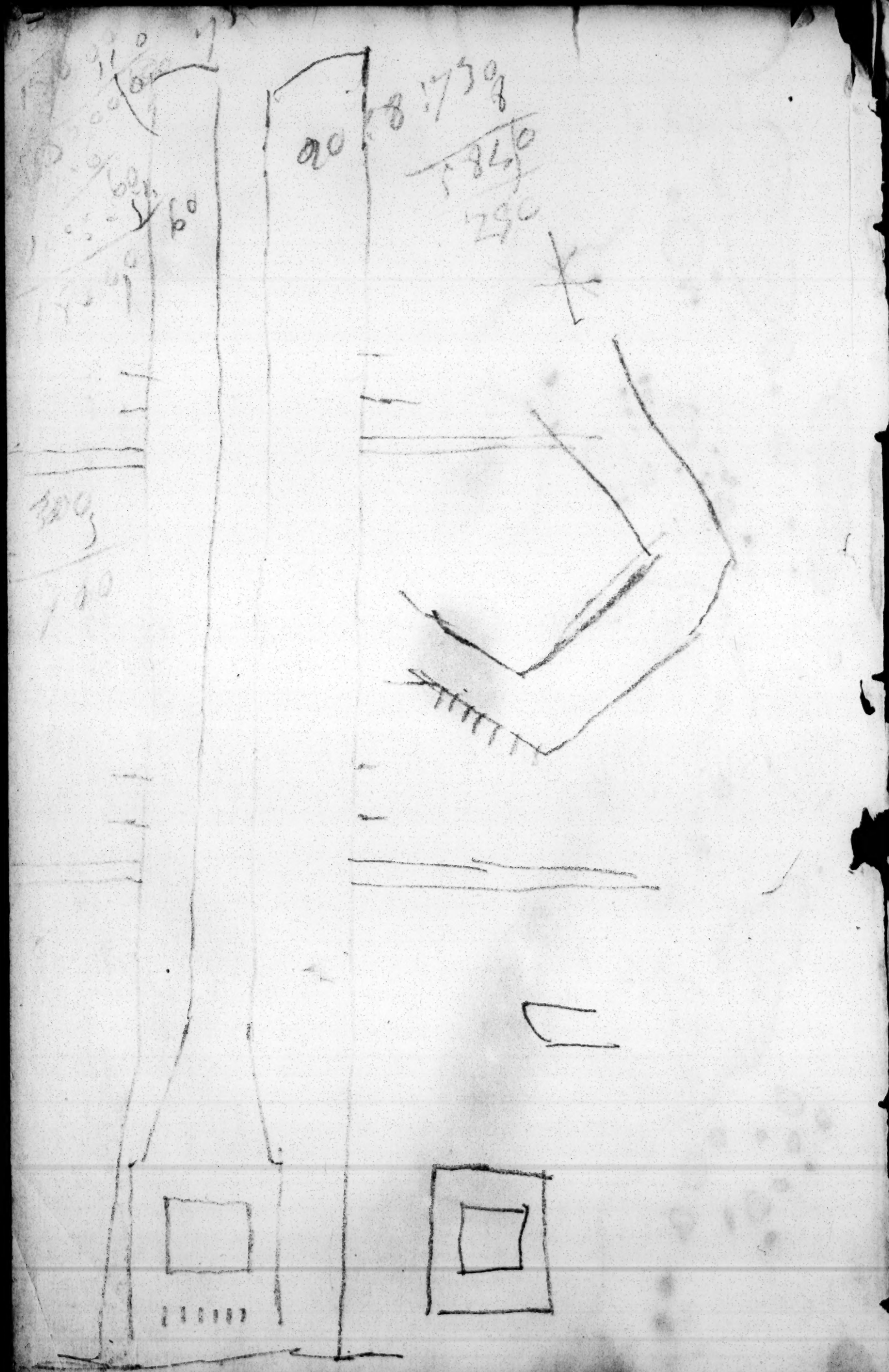

THE

RIGHTS OF NATURE,

AGAINST THE

USURPATIONS OF ESTABLISHMENTS.

A SERIES OF LETTERS TO

THE PEOPLE OF BRITAIN,

ON

THE STATE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS,

AND

THE RECENT EFFUSIONS

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDMUND BURKE.

BY JOHN THELWALL.

LETTER THE FIRST.

LONDON:

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1796.

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LETTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS; ON THE SPIRIT AND TEMPER OF BURKE'S LETTERS ON THE PROSPECT OF A REGICIDE PEACE.

THE *tocſin* of ariſtocracy ſounds once more—the *generale* is beaten on the tortured hide of "old John Ziſca," and the yell of perſecution rings through the haraſſed country. Rouſe from the couch of lethargy, O ſluggiſh and inſenſate people! ſhake off the drowſy ſtupor, which, creeping over the frozen nerve of miſery, at once ſoothes, and threatens with the ſleep of death. If neither the blood of friends nor relatives, "poured "out like water" in this profligate cruſade of the powerful and the wealthy, againſt the poor and weak—of governments, and government contractors, againſt their oppreſſed and plundered people*—If neither the ſacrifice of thouſands and tens of thouſands by the yellow peſtilence, that high prieſteſs to the Moloc of Weſt Indian ava-

* "It is in its ſpirit, and for its object, a *civil war*."—Letters, Rivington's edit. p. 144.

rice, who immolates the flower of Britiſh youth, for the perpetuity of the African ſlave trade—If neither the woes, nor the inſults you have endured, nor the perſecutions which have outraged all humanity, and made law a mockery; if neither the burthens under which you groan, nor the organized ſyſtem of monopoly (which thoſe burthens have of neceſſity produced) and which, worſe than a blighting mildew, hangs on the full ear of your vain proſperity, counteracts the bounties of nature *, and, in ſpite of an abundant harveſt, denies to the craving family of the artificer and the peaſant, even the *negative bleſſing* † of a plenteous meal—If neither of theſe, nor all accumulated together in one horrid maſs, can goad and urge you to the manly energies of reaſon, and the decided tone of *authoritative* complaint—If neither the invocations nor the ſufferings of the intrepid few, who, even in theſe bad times, dare to be the advocates of human rights, can warm you to ſympathy, or rouſe you to reflection, yet, liſten awhile to the prophetic fury of the arch-enemy of your rights and freedom: peruſe the portentous leaves he has thus wildly ſcattered, and think

* Bread 9d. a quartern loaf, immediately after a moſt abundant harveſt: The cauſe of this evil, and the nature of the remedy, will be diſcuſſed in the following letters.

† I ſhall ſhew hereafter, that, in the preſent ſtate of ſociety, the labourer has a right to ſomething more than meat, drink, ſleep, and clothing, in return for his productive toil.

upon

upon the fetters that are ſtill forging for you: Attend, I ſay, to the threats ſo liberally diſtributed, ſtamped as it were, with the currency of authority, from the very mint of court confidence, and iſſued by the penſioned hand of an hireling apoſtate, paid by the produce of *your labour* to encreaſe your burthens, and deſtroy your rights: and, when you have heard theſe denunciations, which in daring profligacy outſtrip conception, and almoſt make us heretics againſt our ſenſes, then ſink down again, if ye can, into your wonted ſupineneſs, till the "ſalutary, but critical terrors of the cautery and the knife *"—the relumined fires of Smithfield, and the axe upon Tower Hill, ſhall awaken, and warn ye that your hour is come.

For myſelf, my heart bleeds, when I think of the abject condition to which the ſpirit of my devoted country is beaten down, when hireling plunderers, riotous paupers, dependant upon the purſe of extorted charity (to ſupport whoſe waſteful luxury the labourer muſt ſweat, ſo much the more at his hard drudgery, and return at night to ſo much the worſe hammock and the worſe meal) can dare to give public utterance to ſuch ſentiments as theſe pamphlets contain: Sentiments which outrage all hu-

* Letters, p. 20. The whole paſſage from which this ſentence is quoted, is an after-thought. It is not to be found in Owen's edit.

manity—which defy all ſhame—which breathe the moſt unqualified tyranny—excite to the moſt ſanguinary perſecutions—tear aſunder, with the utmoſt violence, all communion and ſympathy between the governing few and the governed multitude*—declare open, inveterate, irreconcileable war, on the part of the former, not only againſt the lives, properties, and liberties, but againſt the opinions, feelings, inclinations of the latter—uphold the horrible doctrine of exterminating opinions, and enforcing creeds and ceremonies by the ſword†—threaten, with ſomething more than diſtant hints, the abrogation of every proviſion that ſtands between the life of the patriot, and the vengeance of a corrupt and irritated court‡, and denounce at once, a com-

* It has been the faſhion, in certain aſſemblies, to rail againſt the practice of ſeparating the government from the nation, as a new-fangled Jacobinical artifice; and Mr. B. is moſt outrageous againſt the French Directory on this account: Yet he himſelf out-jacobinizes Jacobiniſm in this way. There is, however, nothing new in it. The diſtinction is as old as hiſtory, as every man of reading well knows. The moſt revered and philoſophical of the ancient hiſtorians teach us by their ſentiments, as well as their facts, that when governments ſet up an intereſt oppoſite to that of the people—the people are neceſſitated to ſeek an intereſt in oppoſition to their governments.

† Thoughts, p. 63 to 68.—Owen's edit. Not in Rivington's.

‡ Letters, p. 20. If I underſtand this paſſage, it is a prelude to the invaſion of trial by jury. See further, p. 53, 54, &c.

puted

puted number of eighty thouſand people *, (according to the author's own account, the ſtem and flower of Britiſh intellect †) to the prompt and deſtroying fury of " a vigour beyond the law."

Yes, my heart bleeds to think that ſuch men *dare* to utter ſuch ſentiments—for though I wiſh not to ſtop the current of diſcuſſion, either by legal perſecution, or the fury of a mob, yet moſt certainly I do wiſh to uphold the ſalutary awe of popular opinion; and, notwithſtanding ſome doctrines of ſuppoſed treaſons, propagated in the late never to be forgotten parliament, and retailed again (if retail it could be called) in the nine hour harangues of Adair, Scott, and Mitford, I ſhall venture to affirm, that in whatever country this ſalutary awe does not operate, not only upon the tools and dependants of government, but upon the government itſelf, *even to its higheſt head*, there tyranny, in its eſſence, is already eſtabliſhed, and liberty is but a name.

And, how is this ſalutary awe to be enforced? By the manly energies of the people—by their active vigilance, in watching the conduct of their governors, and comparing it with the ſentiments of their advocates and known retainers—by that in-

* Letters. Compare p. 19 to 22, with p. 67, 68, and 71.

† Ibid. p. 70 and 144.

tellectual

tellectual courage, which dares to give utterance to whatever the heart feels; and, above all, by that ſturdy, reſtleſs, jealous exertion of the inalienable prerogative of reaſon, which contends, inch by inch, for the great charters of birth-right and nature, and inſtead of ſhrinking, with panic terror, at every triumph of *legal* innovation, is rouſed to freſh exertions by every retrenchment, and exerciſes, with greater ardour, the rights which yet remain. Theſe are the means by which a brave and enlightened people *overawe* their governors, and compel them to exerciſe a wary and modeſt caution, ſalutary to the nation at large, and ultimately beneficial to themſelves. Theſe are the true and genuine checks of a free government. Without theſe, I repeat it, no government can be free. Different ſhapes and modes of political inſtitution, may give to theſe checks a different mode of operation—a better or a worſe—a more permanent, or a more precarious organization; but the principle is in the heart of the people; and where this principle is active, monarchy* itſelf may be attempered with a degree of liberty;

* By monarchy, the reader is to remember, that I mean ſomething very different from kingly power. The former means a government *by one man*, who holds his power by ſome ſuppoſed or aſſumed *individual* right: the latter is a delegated truſt, conferred by, and held for the acknowledged *benefit of the people*. Where monarchy begins, kingſhip ends; and the people who bargained for a king, are not bound to ſubmit to a monarch.

without

without it, republics are but deſpotiſms in maſquerade.

How ſtands it in this country with reſpect to this ſalutary check, grounded (as in the enſuing letters I ſhall prove it to be) in the eſſential rights of nature, and the very principles of political aſſociation? Does the government—does the legiſlature—do the miniſters, or even the hireling ſcribblers of thoſe miniſters, feel and acknowledge this controlling awe? No. The legiſlature (the *late* legiſlature) has ventured to call this overawing influence of popular opinion high treaſon; the miniſters have declared, in expreſs terms, that they lay taxes on our ſhoulders for the ſupport of an immenſe troop of cavalry, to out-awe this awe, to deſtroy this check, to ſuppreſs this opinion, to ram it down our throats with the broad ſword, or drown it with the murderous roar of muſquetry; while grey-headed, penſioned apoſtates—the purchaſed panders of official corruption, bewail the pretended "relaxation of all authority *," and call aloud for laws of more ſanguinary promptitude, and meaſures of more coercive violence †, becauſe, "the crown," forſooth, cannot deſtroy,

* Letters, p. 19.

† "The ſteadineſs of the phyſician is overpowered—The doctor of the conſtitution ſhrinks from his own operation," &c. p. 20. The whole paſſage is quoted and examined, p. 57 of this letter.

at

at will, whomſoever it chooſes to arraign, but "retires from *its courts*, defeated and diſgraced*" by the groundleſs proſecutions with which its miniſters inſult the juſtice and the feelings of the nation. Could theſe things be—could we be thus dragooned and trampled upon—half gagged, and half bullied into ſilence, if we were the men we have been?—if we inherited the ſpirit of thoſe anceſtors, over whoſe honourable graves we ſtalk, an abject and degraded progeny? No, the evil is here. A greedy and unſocial ſelfiſhneſs abſorbs our faculties. A baſe timidity bows our ſoliciting necks to the yoke: and a want of all kindneſs, all good faith, and all common juſtice, to thoſe who embark fairly in the common cauſe, palſies every effort of patriotiſm; and leaves the iſolated wretch, whoſe deſperate honeſty ſtill prompts him to contend with powerful uſurpation, more a prey to the malignant envy of thoſe he endeavours to ſerve, than the perſecuting violence of the clan whoſe corruption he has the hardihood to expoſe. Theſe diſpoſitions have had more to do in proſtrating the hopes and liberties of the people, at the footſtool of borough-mongering uſurpation, than all the proclamations and perſecutions of the laſt five years, backed and ſupported with new-fangled laws of treaſon and ſedition, the

* Letters, p. 20.

formidable

formidable legions of military aſſociators, and all the troops of fencible and yeomanry cavalry which inflate with ſuch audacious confidence *the* MARAT *of the Britiſh cabinet*.

While theſe diſpoſitions remain, the cauſe of liberty will be retrogade, the beggary and wretchedneſs of the multitude will continually encreaſe, and the growing inſolence of authoriſed plunder will exult in apparent omnipotence. In ſhort, while each man continues to care for no one but himſelf, all will be trampled and oppreſſed; and while the friends of liberty, unaſſociated, and unendeared to each other*, inſtead of conſidering themſelves as one common family, cheriſh their private jealouſies, and forget their common intereſts, ſo long will freſh projects of uſurpation be formed and executed with impunity, and mankind be treated like a herd of cattle. But when the people, recovered from their panic, and rouſed from their inſenſibility, ſhall be perſuaded to compare their faculties with their condition—

* It is really lamentable to recollect how large a portion of thoſe who have been perſecuted for their attachment to the public cauſe, have either been driven to America for bread, or are pining for want of it at home. Ariſtocrats will not employ the men whom they have injured, and democrats neglect the veterans who have ſerved them. Every patriot, thus abandoned to ruin, is a feather plucked from the wing of Freedom.

the ſituation in which they are—and that in which they have a right to be—when no longer the dupes of their own miſtaken ſelfiſhneſs, they ſhall feel and acknowledge the importance of a perſevering fortitude, and (yielding to that ſtrong ſenſe of general neceſſity, which annihilates, or at leaſt ſuſpends, the petty factions of jealouſy and envy) with a generous confidence and unanimity ſhall reſolve to demand their rights; then ſhall the golden viſions of corruption fade away, and the dark miſts of hovering deſpotiſm flee before the riſing ſun of Britiſh freedom. Then ſhall the hireling Burke, with the whole clan of penſioned ſcribblers, inſtead of yelping thus audaciouſly for the blood of their fellow citizens, bow, with becoming awe, to the tribunal of popular opinion, and learn to reſpect the rights and the feelings, not only of "four hundred thouſand political ci-"tizens *," but of ſeven millions of enlightened Britons, all conſcious of their natural and civil equality; all aſſerting their equal ſhare in the common inheritance of *rights*, and producing "(in "their perſons) their title deeds †."

In the meantime, let us hope that this new outrage upon the rights, and feelings, and ſecurity

* Letters, p. 67.

† *Paine's Firſt Principles of Government.*—Intrinſically the moſt valuable of all his productions.

of

of mankind, will not be without its influence in producing the deſired effect: for, if ever wholeſale denunciations could inſpire a ſenſe of common danger—and, if ever a ſenſe of common danger had the power of knitting men together in the firm links of unanimity and common intereſt, ſurely theſe pamphlets contain ſufficient warning, that we muſt be no longer ſupine, ſelfiſh, and divided—unleſs, indeed, we mean to be reduced to the dreadful alternative of either abandoning, for ever, all diſcuſſion of our rights—all hope of improving our miſerable condition—all oppoſition to the meaſures of government, however corrupt and tyrannical they may become, or of reſigning to proſcription, legalized maſſacre, or hired aſſaſſination, an acknowledged fifth—perhaps a third—perhaps more than half of the well informed, reflecting, reaſoning, and, what is ariſtocratically called, *reſpectable* part of the community.

This, I ſay, is the plain alternative, laid down by Mr. Burke. But I ſhall not, according to his faſhion, ſatisfy myſelf with aſſertion. I ſhall proceed to proof.

Mr. B. I ſhould premiſe, is a very deſultory, and excentric writer. His combuſtible imagination fumes, and boils, and burſts away, like the lava from a volcano (as bright, and as

deſtructive) in a thouſand different directions; apparently without art or deſign. Order and arrangement appear to be entirely deſpiſed; proportion of parts is expreſsly laid down, in his only elementary work*, to be no ingredient of the beautiful; and his political publications may be regarded as illuſtrations of this curious doctrine. Tropes, ſentiments, and propoſitions, are every now and then ſtarting up, one knows not why, or whence, or wherefore.

> " The things, 'tis true, are coſtly, rich, and rare:
> " But wonder how the devil they got there!"

Every metaphor becomes an allegory; every embelliſhment a digreſſion; and every digreſſion a voluminous epiſode. But the reader, who, on this account, ſhould calculate upon the artleſſneſs of Mr. Burke's mind, would do no credit to his own penetration. " If this be madneſs, there is me-" thod in't." In this excurſive frenzy of compoſition, there is much deep deſign and inſidious policy. He not only writes with a two-fold object—but his objects are in diametrical oppoſition to each other. It is his intention at once to inſtruct and to confuſe. Even in that ſmall proportion of the people of Britain whom he calls

* Treatiſe on the Sublime and Beautiful, part III. ſect. 2, 3, 4, and 5.

" the

" the Britiſh public," there is a ſtill ſmaller ſubdiviſion (men of complete leiſure, and of trained political education) whom he regards as the initiated few, and who, of courſe, may be expected to catch up, and put together, many of the looſe disjointed hints, ſcattered here and there, with ſuch ſtudied careleſſneſs as to eſcape the obſervation of thoſe who " read as they run." Hence, if we want to know the whole meaning, and real object of this maſter of political controverſy, inſtead of following him through the regular ſucceſſion of pages and paragraphs, we muſt ſeek for the leading traits and poſitions of his work, and then, putting together the disjointed parts of the ſyllogiſm ſo artfully divided, we muſt extract the enveloped concluſion for ourſelves.

Having furniſhed the reader with this clue, let him turn to the *Letters*," *p.* 66 *to* 71, or the " *Thoughts*," *p.* 16 *to* 21, then to the " *Thoughts*," *p.* 63 *to* 68, and to the " *Letters*, *p.* 19 *to* 23, and he will find the dilemma I have ſtated to be very fully unfolded: that is to ſay, he will find the penſioner of an adminiſtration, which has been in the conſtant practice of preparing the minds of a certain claſs, by means of the pamphlets and paragraphs of their hirelings, for the promulgation of every pre-concerted ſcheme of tyranny

and

and uſurpation—he will find this penſioned pander—this grey-headed procurator of proſcription and blood, ſeriouſly recommending, by the "ſevere" and "unſhrinking operation" of ſome new means of perſecution and "*force*," the utter extermination of every ſentiment of reform—or, as he very accurately, though inſidiouſly, calls it, change *.

In the firſt of thoſe paſſages above referred to, Mr. B. after obſerving that, "it cannot be concealed, we are a divided people," proceeds "to compute, and to claſs thoſe, who, *in any political view*, are to be *called* the people."—"In England and Scotland," ſays he, "I compute that thoſe of adult age, not declining in life, of *tolerable leiſure* for ſuch diſcuſſions, and of *ſome means of information*, more or leſs, and who are *above menial dependence*, (or what is virtually ſuch) may amount to about *four hundred thouſand:*" (*Letters* †, *p.* 66) to which, in his original *Thoughts* ‡, he had added—"In this number *I include the women* who take a concern in theſe tranſactions, who cannot exceed twenty thouſand." And thus did this *preux chevalier*, though ſo furious an antagoniſt of the *Rights of Man*, in an unguarded, perhaps a *tender* hour,

* See p. 44 of this Letter.

† Rivington's edit.

‡ Owen's edit. p. 17.

confeſs

confeſs himſelf a proſelyte to the *rights of woman*. And this, ſays he—this petty fraction of the population of England and Scotland—theſe four hundred thouſand males and females, who alone, of all the three or four millions of adults, by whom this iſland is peopled, have leiſure for diſcuſſion, or the means of any degree of information—" *This is the Britiſh public!*"—this is the " *natural* repreſentative of the people!"

O inſulted and degraded Nature!—O awful aggregate of exiſtence! how is thy venerable name blaſphemed, by theſe pious, canting, juggling politicians! By what right, by what omnipotent power, by what uncreating, and re-creating authority, does this baſe renegade doom to political annihilation nine-tenths of the adult inhabitants of a nation? Where are the fate-commanding locks of this painted Jupiter, that thus he thinks to *nod* away the exiſtence of millions?—Where are his thunder-bolts and his lightnings?—But I had forgot: the lightnings and the thunderbolts are all prepared. Windham (the armed progeny of his prolific brain) keeps the key of the dread arſenal; and if he does but turn the maſſy lock, the thunders roar, the conflagration ſpreads, the heavy clouds bear death and deſolation on their wings, and the million trembles and obeys. But waving theſe thundering arguments (and I truſt

that

that the time is not diſtant when the conductors of reaſon will diſarm them of their terrors, and the tempeſts of miniſterial fury rage innoxious!) upon what foundation do theſe calculators take a tenth for the whole, and call four hundred thouſand (men and *women*) "the public of Britain?" Why, truly—the reaſon is even more profligate than the aſſertion itſelf!—becauſe of our whole population not more than a tenth-part have either the *leiſure*, or the means for any degree of "information, more or leſs!" And is this your boaſted ſtate of civilization and refinement?—Is this the wealth, grandeur, proſperity, and flouriſhing condition of the country?—Is this good order?—Is this *government* (or is it grinding and murderous oppreſſion) which dooms the maſs of mankind to inceſſant toil, and comfortleſs aſſiduity, and aſſigns the leiſure, and the means of any degree of information or diſcuſſion, to a tenth-part only of the inhabitants? And, even of this tenth, how large a portion are to be ranked, not among the *promoters*, but the *deſtroyers* of the proſperity ſo much vaunted:—not among the productive labourers, but among the caterpillars and locuſts, the blights and mildews of ſocial induſtry!—the placemen and the penſioners; the Burkes and the Reeveses—unprincipled ſophiſts hired with prodigal portions of the general plunder,

plunder, to abuſe, calumniate, and deſtroy the poor wretches whom this plunder reduces to ſtarving beggary.

Are theſe the inſtitutions which Mr. B. wiſhes to ſupport? Are theſe the perfect models of ſocial juriſprudence which it is blaſphemy to approach with the unhallowed finger of innovation or reform? Are theſe (in their effects) the regular and orderly fabrics of the ancient legitimate "government of ſtates," whoſe plans and materials were "drawn from the old Germanic "or Gothic cuſtumary *," and of which thoſe famous architects, "the civilians, the juriſts, and "the publiciſts," have given us ſuch flattering draughts, ground plots and elevations? If they are, periſh, I ſay, ſuch temples of oppreſſion and injuſtice! Away with your idle jargon of *venerable* antiquity:—that awful, but endearing epithet, belongs not, Mr. *Burke*, to grey hairs alone. Away with your pompous boaſts of grace, beauty, and ſublimity, of ſwelling proportions, and poliſhed ſymmetry. If ſuch are the effects of theſe fabrics, they are hateful and accurſed; and, though crowned with "Corinthian capitals," though hung with antique trophies of renown, and adorned with offerings of ancient and modern piety, they muſt periſh; they ought to periſh; and they

* Letters, p. 110. Thoughts, p. 49.

that the time is not diſtant when the conductors of reaſon will diſarm them of their terrors, and the tempeſts of miniſterial fury rage innoxious!) upon what foundation do theſe calculators take a tenth for the whole, and call four hundred thouſand (men and *women*) "the public of Britain?" Why, truly—the reaſon is even more profligate than the aſſertion itſelf!—becauſe of our whole population not more than a tenth-part have either the *leiſure*, or the means for any degree of "information, more or leſs!" And is this your boaſted ſtate of civilization and refinement?—Is this the wealth, grandeur, proſperity, and flouriſhing condition of the country?—Is this good order?—Is this *government* (or is it grinding and murderous oppreſſion) which dooms the maſs of mankind to inceſſant toil, and comfortleſs aſſiduity, and aſſigns the leiſure, and the means of any degree of information or diſcuſſion, to a tenth-part only of the inhabitants? And, even of this tenth, how large a portion are to be ranked, not among the *promoters*, but the *deſtroyers* of the proſperity ſo much vaunted:—not among the productive labourers, but among the caterpillars and locuſts, the blights and mildews of ſocial induſtry!—the placemen and the penſioners; the Burkes and the Reeveses—unprincipled ſophiſts hired with prodigal portions of the general plunder,

plunder, to abuſe, calumniate, and deſtroy the poor wretches whom this plunder reduces to ſtarving beggary.

Are theſe the inſtitutions which Mr. B. wiſhes to ſupport? Are theſe the perfect models of ſocial juriſprudence which it is blaſphemy to approach with the unhallowed finger of innovation or reform? Are theſe (in their effects) the regular and orderly fabrics of the ancient legitimate "government of ſtates," whoſe plans and materials were "drawn from the old Germanic "or Gothic cuſtumary *," and of which thoſe famous architects, "the civilians, the juriſts, and "the publiciſts," have given us ſuch flattering draughts, ground plots and elevations? If they are, periſh, I ſay, ſuch temples of oppreſſion and injuſtice! Away with your idle jargon of *venerable* antiquity:—that awful, but endearing epithet, belongs not, Mr. *Burke*, to grey hairs alone. Away with your pompous boaſts of grace, beauty, and ſublimity, of ſwelling proportions, and poliſhed ſymmetry. If ſuch are the effects of theſe fabrics, they are hateful and accurſed; and, though crowned with "Corinthian capitals," though hung with antique trophies of renown, and adorned with offerings of ancient and modern piety, they muſt periſh; they ought to periſh; and they

* Letters, p. 110. Thoughts, p. 49.

will. They are Augean ſtables that muſt be cleanſed. They are Baſtilles of intellect, which muſt be deſtroyed. They are inſulting mauſoleums of buried rights, and are ready to totter from their baſe; for the day of the reſurrection is near at hand; and "the vail of the temple ſhall "be rent in twain.."

But no, Mr. B. you are a ſlanderer of the inſtitutions you pretend to ſupport. Things are not yet ſo bad as you repreſent them; though if you and your confederates were ſuffered to proceed in your infamous career, there is no knowing how ſoon we might ſink even to a ſtill lower ſtate of degradation. The number of thoſe, who, ſome how or other, find, or *make*, the means and opportunities of obtaining *ſome degree* of information, is not yet reduced to one in ten. I, indeed, affirm (and I ſhall argue the right hereafter) that *every* man, and every *woman*, and every *child*, ought to obtain ſomething more, in the general diſtribution of the fruits of labour, than food, and rags, and a wretched hammock, with a poor rug to cover it: and that without working twelve or fourteen hours a day, ſix days out of ſeven, from ſix to ſixty.—They have a claim, a ſacred and inviolable claim, growing out of that fundamental maxim, upon which alone all property can be ſupported, to ſome comforts and enjoyments, in addition to the neceſſaries of life; and to ſome

"tolerable

" tolerable leiſure for ſuch diſcuſſion, and ſome " means of ſuch information," as may lead to an underſtanding of their *rights*; without which they can never underſtand their *duties*. It is true, in the preſent circumſtances of ſociety, the maſs of the people are far from the enjoyment of this right: let Mr. B. determine whether this is to be attributed to the nature, or the corruption of our inſtitutions. But ſtill, notwithſtanding the ſcandalouſly inadequate price of labour—wages being, in many inſtances, rather a mockery than a ſupport;—notwithſtanding the unreaſonable number of hours through which the labour of the day is protracted, and the impediments thrown in the way of a cheap, and, therefore general, circulation of knowledge, by the duties on paper, ſtamps on news-papers, advertiſements, and the like; yet, judging of the whole country, from the parts which I have ſeen, and making all poſſible allowances for the difference of local and adventitious advantages, Mr. B. will not be able to contract his *new ariſtocracy of thinkers and diſcourſers* into any thing like the narrow circle of four hundred thouſand. This champion for the few, to the excluſion of the many—this advocate for the noble and the gentle, at the expence of the uſeful and the honeſt, may exult as much as he pleaſes in the luxuriancy of his imagination, his various ſtores of learning and of ſcience, his

hours of literary leiſure, and his familiar intercourſe with the wits and literati of half a century, but there are hundreds, nay thouſands, in thoſe claſſes excluded from his calculation, who though they could neither endite, nor comprehend his learned metaphors and daſhing periods, would yet bluſh at ſuch flimſy ſophiſms as he ſometimes covers with a cloud of ſplendour; and with the weapons of plain, ſolid, Socratic argument, would beat half a dozen ſuch combatants out of the arena. I could point him to whole companies, whole neighbourhoods *, nay,

* I might refer particularly to Sheffield. My ſtay in that place was very ſhort; but it was long enough to ſee that there is a great body of virtue, intelligence, and well grounded principle among what may be called the *Sanſculotterie:* but it is a body without a head. They have unfortunately no leaders. There are, indeed, ſeveral people of conſiderable property and influence who *think* with them; but who have not the courage, or the energy, to take that open and decided part which might promote the real peace (for *oppreſſion is not peace)* and happineſs of the neighbourhood: and as for that *Chicken-witted thing* that calls *itſelf* a Whig leader in thoſe parts, *it* is the being moſt deſpiſed for ariſtocratic domination of any creature in the county: and I am ſure I mean no diſparagement to *Squire, Juſtice, Colonel* AYTHORPE!!! If any three or four perſons of weight and pecuniary conſequence in that place, would but take theſe honeſt, intelligent manufacturers and their cauſe fairly and publicly by the hand (as perſons of that deſcription, to their immortal honour, have done in Norwich) in Sheffield, as in Norwich, the petty tyranny of provincial perſecution would preſently be at an end; the inſtruments of power would feel, and practically confeſs that ſalutary awe of which I have ſpoken above; and no jack in office would dare to exerciſe, or to threaten, the exertion of a vigour beyond the law.

almoſt

almoſt whole profeſſions of labouring manufacturers, who underſtand the principles of government much better than himſelf, and who want nothing but practical fluency to render them moſt formidable antagoniſts to the whole college of ariſtocratical declaimers.

The fact is, that monopoly, and the hideous accumulation of capital in a few hands, like all diſeaſes not abſolutely mortal, carry, in their own enormity, the ſeeds of cure. Man is, by his very nature, ſocial and communicative—proud to diſplay the little knowledge he poſſeſſes, and eager, as opportunity preſents, to encreaſe his ſtore. Whatever preſſes men together, therefore, though it may generate ſome vices, is favourable to the diffuſion of knowledge, and ultimately promotive of human liberty. Hence every large workſhop and manufactory is a ſort of political ſociety, which no act of parliament can ſilence, and no magiſtrate diſperſe. Socrates, therefore, (the firſt democratical lecturer, mentioned in hiſtory, and the founder of the unſophiſticated, and unreſtricted ſyſtem of *Sanſ-culotte* philoſophy) when he wiſhed to expoſe " the corruption and venality " of the times *," and thoſe " falſe tenets and opi- " nions which were contrary to the happineſs of " the human race †," acted conſiſtently with his

* Cullen's life of Socrates, prefixed to his tranſlation of the Phædon, p. 23.

† Ibid. p. 15.

high

high character for wiſdom and penetration, in viſiting, among other places of reſort, the ſhops where workmen aſſembled to purſue their vocations *.—" He began," ſays the biographer, " to " oppoſe *ſophiſtry* and ſuperſtition with ſucceſs, " and to teach his fellow *citizens* wiſdom and " virtue. In the open ſtreets, in the public " walks and baths, in private houſes, in the *work-* " *ſhops of artiſts*, or wherever he found men whom " he could make better, he entered into converſa- " tion with them, explained what was right and " wrong, good and evil, holy and unholy, &c." The nature and tendency of theſe converſations we learn from a variety of paſſages. We are particularly informed that ſuch was his intrepid zeal for the promotion of truth, and the aſſertion of human liberty, that " As ſoon as any opinion or " ſuperſtition occaſioned an *open violence*, the in- " vaſion of the NATURAL RIGHTS OF " MAN, or the corruption of their morals, no " threats or perſecution could deter him from de- " claring againſt it †." And, again, we find that when a ſenate of tyrants, a vile and deteſtable *Oligarchy* ‡, aſſiſted by an armed force, and a foreign alliance, trampled on the rights and liberties of the Athenian people, and exerciſed an authority beyond the law—" robbing the moſt up- " right men of the republic of their property and

* Life Socr. p. 12. † Ibid. p. 32. ‡ Ibid. p. 35.

" their

" their lives, *under the pretext of puniſhing rebellion and* " *treaſonable offences* *," baniſhing others, and driving many more to ſeek for peace and ſafety in voluntary emigration; in the midſt of theſe perſecutions and proſcriptions, Socrates was found, as uſual, in the places of public reſort—in the workſhops of the artiſts, and among the labourers in their manufactories, uttering ſeditious allegories, and condemning the deſolating tyranny of the Oligarchy. " It is wonderful indeed," he is reported to have ſaid, " if ſhepherds make the herd " which is entruſted to their care grow ſmaller, " and more meagre, and yet ſhall not be ac- " counted bad ſhepherds; but it is ſtill more " wonderful, if the guardians of a ſtate make its " ſubjects grow fewer and worſe, that they ſhould " not be accounted bad guardians †."

Now,

* Cullen's Life of Socr. p. 35. *N. B.* The book from which I quote this, was dedicated to the Right Honourable *Henry Dundas*, in 1789.

† Ibid. p. 36. The reader will not, after theſe ſpecimens, be ſurpriſed that an act of parliament was made by the tyrannical Oligarchy to ſtop the mouth of Socrates; and that *Critias* and *Characles*, two of their ſophiſts, or ſtate lawyers *(ſee p.* 36.) were employed to entrap, impeach, and deſtroy him; while their buffoons were ſet to work, to ridicule and defame him to the people, and " the *prieſts*," and other venal wretches, " who " felt Socrates a thorn in their ſide," made uſe of their pious cant and holy mummeries " to turn the minds of the Athe- " nians againſt him." *(p.* 24, 25.) Such was the origin of the conſpiracy againſt Socrates. A victim to that conſpiracy he fell

Now, though every workſhop cannot have a Socrates within the pale of its own ſociety, nor even every manufacturing town a man of ſuch wiſdom, virtue, and *opportunities* to inſtruct them, yet a ſort of Socratic ſpirit will neceſſarily grow up, wherever large bodies of men aſſemble. Each brings, as it were, into the common bank his mite of information, and putting it to a ſort of circulating uſance, each contributor has the advantage of a large intereſt, without any diminution of capital.

But ſuch men, I ſhall be told, are out of the queſtion: let their capacities, their acquirements, their underſtandings be what they may, they form no part of "the Britiſh public;" they are in a ſtate of "menial *dependance* (or what is vir-" tually ſuch.)"—Dependance and independance! Fine diſtinctions! But in what do they conſiſt?

fell—the wiſeſt, the greateſt, the moſt virtuous of mankind. Yet a pedantic fellow, one Dr. Biſſet, in a certain ridiculous farrago of ignorance and miſrepreſentation, which he calls a "Sketch of Democracy," repreſents him as the victim of democratic envy and injuſtice; and, by a curious perverſion of facts, makes *Critias* and *Characles* (the two ſophiſts, or lawyers, employed by the tyrants to deſtroy him) "two lecturers, who earned their bread by gratifying the prejudices of the people, and incenſing them againſt *dignified* characters." Socrates was ſo far from being a dignified character in Dr. B.'s ſenſe of the word, that his mother was a poor midwife; his father a ſtone-maſon; and he himſelf worked ſeveral years in his father's yard. His dignity was of a nobler kind.

Are

Are they to be ſought in the ſtation, or in the mind? Do wealth and rank give independance? Does induſtrious poverty of neceſſity degrade the man? An anecdote ſhall ſettle theſe queſtions.

During the late election at Nottingham, one of the principal manufacturers of that place, who had always deprecated, with great ſeverity, the preſent war, and the whole ſyſtem of miniſterial meaſures, was obſerved, of a ſudden, to become reſerved and wavering. The miniſterial candidate had concerns with a banking houſe, which, by means of acceptances, diſcounts, and the like, was exceedingly uſeful to him, in his large dealings. Dr. *Crompton* was a candidate for the people: but he had no connection with any bank, but that of virtue and patriotiſm; and their notes, you know, are not current in commercial tranſactions. The wealthy manufacturer deliberated —he doubted—he calculated—he reſolved to vote for the miniſterial champion. He determined to canvaſs for him. "William," ſaid he, to one of his journeymen, "I hope you mean "to vote for Mr. *Smith?*"—"No, Sir," replied the *menial dependant*, "indeed I do not. I am ſur- "priſed *you* ſhould aſk me ſuch a queſtion. How- "ever, if *you* are not independent, I AM!" This, however, I am aware, will be no argument, *ad hominem*, as they call it, to Mr. B. It will rather enflame than moderate his prejudices. He will re-

gard it as a flagrant act of *Jacobiniſm* and inſubordination; an overt-act of treaſon againſt the ſovereignty of wealth; a "revolt of enterpriſing "talent againſt property*."

I grant, alſo, that this argument will not univerſally apply. Though ſome men have energy of mind enough to act in this independant way, upon ſuch occaſions, many, under ſuch circumſtances, feel themſelves compelled to bow. During the ſame Nottingham election, an inſtance of this ſort occurred, which, to minds of a particular ſtamp at leaſt, cannot fail to be intereſting.

A poor manufacturer, who was paſt his beſt days, and to whom, therefore, it was of ſerious conſequence to be diſmiſſed from an eſtabliſhed ſhop—eſpecially as he had a large family to ſupport—was preſſed by his employer, in very authoritative terms, to vote for this ſame Mr. Smith. He heſitated: but the very ſuſtenance of his family was at ſtake; and he yielded. Going up to the huſtings, and having given in his name, he was aſked by the poll-clerk, for whom he voted? "Why, I have two votes; have I not?"—"You "have."—"Well, then, I give one of them to "Mr. Smith—but that's not mine: it's my maſ-"ter's! The other's my own; and I'll give that to "Dr. Crompton—for he's the man for the peo-

* Letters, p. 98.

"ple!"

" ple!"—" Thank you, my good friend," (exclaims the *courtly* candidate)—" thank you, for " me. Let me have the pleaſure of ſhaking " hands with you."—No, I'm d—d if I do," replied the voter; " I was obliged to vote for you, " but I an't obliged to ſhake hands with you, " neither. But I'll ſhake hands with you, Dr. " Crompton; for I gave it *you* from my heart!" Mr. B. may deſpiſe the ſans-culotiſm diſplayed in this anecdote—and I am certainly no enemy to ſoothing manners and decorum;—but yet ſuch energy of mind, however rudely faſhioned, is of ten thouſand times more real worth than all the poliſhed periods of penſioned apoſtacy, and all " the dreſſed up ſmiles that ever flickered on the " curled lips" of obſequious courtiers! And whatever ſentiments a maſter of the ceremonies might entertain upon the ſubject, he is but a ſhallow politician who excludes ſuch men from the account, in his calculations of the weight and force of opinion. Such men have not, it is true, all the advantages of free agency:—ſo much the worſe for Britain*. The generality of them have no votes at all; and many who have, are under coercion in the exerciſe of their privilege—ſo

* I do not mean the myſterious, allegorical thing, which *ſtateſmen* call the country. I mean the aggregate of Britiſh population. That is my idea of a country, or a ſtate.

much the greater ſcandal to juſtice and humanity. But though they have not votes, they have opinions. They are a part of "the Britiſh public," even of Mr. Burke's *informed, diſcuſſing*, garrulous public, upon which "more than the legal conſtituent, the artificial repreſentative," is ſuppoſed (falſely ſuppoſed) to depend†. An oppreſſive

† Letters, p. 67.

I ought not, while ſpeaking of humble patriotiſm, to forget the *independant, poor* voters of Norwich: among which there are ſix or ſeven hundred, whom (even in theſe ſeaſons of diſtreſs) no threats, no intereſt, no bribery can ſhake: but who will vote for the permanent liberties of themſelves and families, at the hazard of their temporary bread. Upon any *ſtrong exigency*, this number (I mean, among the *labouring freemen* of that city) would be nearly doubled: that is to ſay, it would embrace almoſt the whole claſs. If *Bartlet Gurney*, the late candidate, had ſtood forward manfully (or rather, if his family had not held him back)—if he had even done thoſe things, which, under *exiſting circumſtances*, any candidate may fairly and honourably do—I mean, brought up the London and other out-voters, who were in his intereſt, (which would not have been the tythe, or twentieth part of what his opponent is *known* to have done)—nay, had he even ſhewn himſelf on the huſtings, and convinced the people, that he was in earneſt, (inſtead of *running into the north* to avoid them) he would have driven the War Secretary from the market-place, with a majority ſo deciſive, as would have ſunk that *bluſtering puppet of a day* into political annihilation. Even as it was, Bartlet Gurney had a majority of 143 *reſident votes*. The Quakers (that body of men, whom, of all religioniſts, I moſt revere and love) muſt pardon me, if I ſay, that the timid baſhfulneſs of ſectarian pride loſt Freedom a triumph, of which no other circumſtance could have deprived her.

combination

combination of employers, the cold graſp of penury, or the brutal violence of a mad-headed, drunken, profligate magiſtrate (armed, for the ſake of the conſtitutional ſyſtem of checks, with the united powers of the police, and of the ſword) may ſuppreſs, for awhile, the due influence of this opinion; but, ultimately, it will have its weight: and its weight will be greateſt when its exertion is of moſt importance. In the mean time, it has a degree of influence even now; though not in its natural and rightful place—that aſſembly which *calls itſelf* the Commons Houſe of Parliament;—the honourable and right honourable members of which (as we are expreſsly told) are in ſuch a ſtate of "menial de-"pendance, (or what is *virtually* ſuch) that the "*votes* of the majority are directly oppoſite to "their *diſpoſitions**. But it has its influence—a powerful influence, upon the reſources of the country; upon the expence and the facility of filling the ranks of the army, and upon the ſpirit of enthuſiaſm in the day of battle. It has its influence, alſo, on the pillow of the miniſter, where it requires no ſecond-ſight to perceive, that it haunts his imagination, and diſturbs his ſlumbers. There, in prophetic viſions, it foretels the ſad cataſtrophe of his ambition, and points out, in the

* Letters, p. 63; and Thoughts, p. 14, where it is put ſtill more ſtrongly.

continuance

continuance of this war, the means of Britiſh renovation; the approaching failure of the funding ſyſtem; the demurs of money-lenders, and the prudent deſertion of thoſe " life and fortune " men," who, repenting the madneſs of " Mer- " chant Taylors Hall," and finding the bankrupt ſtate no longer competent to ſupport, at once, the burthen of public credit, and the enormous prodigality of the preſent ſyſtem, will be obliged to *abandon the borough-mongers to preſerve their property*.

To appeaſe this opinion, to lay this wandering ghoſt* of popular diſcontent, the ſimulator, Pitt, has drawn once more around him this magic circle of deluſion, with charms and ſpells of pretended negociation, and backward mutters of arrogance and recantation. But lift up your voices, ye artificers, ye mechanics, ye manufacturers of the land, ye genuine props and pillars of the nation! Be not amuſed with pretended treaties! for what is a peace but war, to you, while ye drudge in ſervile miſery for inadequate rewards, and your families pine in want and ignorance? Wear not

* The body is reported to have been buried, at the beginning of December laſt, in St. Stephen's Chapel, with this inſcription—" Pitt and Grenville's Acts;"—and underneath, " in a ſtate of *internal tranquillity*." Thus much by authority. To which is added, by an unknown hand, " but in hopes of a " joyful reſurrection."

your

your lungs with ſighs and ſullen murmurs—let not only the nocturnal phantom, but the living body of your complaints appear before your oppreſſors. Try once more the manly energies of reaſon; and tell them, with a clear and decided tone, that "peace is not peace, without re-"form:" that "your diſcontents can never be "allayed, without the reſtoration of equal rights, "and equal laws, and the adoption of a pure and "independant organ, through which the opinions, "not of a *tenth-part*, but of the whole nation, "can be freely delivered, and diſtinctly heard."

But no: we are told, the nation wants no ſuch organ. The opinions of the *menial, dependant maſs*, muſt be taken for granted from thoſe of their *betters*. In thoſe more reputable orders, in that privileged four hundred thouſand, who, by virtue of their ſituation, have an excluſive licence to enquire and to diſcuſs, the people have, already, "a *natural* repreſentative." Natural repreſentative!—Of what excellent uſe, in the ſcience of confuſing mankind, is this prerogative of coining new phraſes! Natural repreſentative of the people! The people itſelf, as the word is here uſed, is an artificial, or corporate body—for it means the aggregate population of a particular ſtate, or body politic: and how there can be a *natural repreſentative* of an *artificial corporation*, I am yet to learn. I can underſtand, indeed, that the parent

is

is the natural repreſentative of his infant children, armed with the right, and bound by the duty of judging and acting for them. I can, alſo, underſtand, that children are the natural repreſentatives of a departed parent; and, as ſuch, are entitled to thoſe portions of the produce of his labour, which have neither been conſumed by him, nor legally ſet apart to ſupport the profligate luxury of placemen and penſioners. But how it ſhould happen, that four hundred thouſand people *(men and women)* from the mere *accident* of living in more comfort, and with leſs toil, ſhould be the natural repreſentatives of three or four millions of other full-grown—full-aged beings, of the ſame ſtructure and faculty with themſelves, but to whom they have neither relationſhip nor affinity, and, as ſuch, ſhould be entitled to act for them, ſpeak for them, think for them, and almoſt eat for them (for even this privilege is ſcarcely left to the perſonal exerciſe of the million) is a problem which the "juriſts and publiciſts" muſt ſolve; for I give it up entirely.

But Mr. B.'s *nature* and mine are widely different. With him every thing is natural that has the hoar of ancient prejudice upon it; and novelty is the teſt of crime. In my humble eſtimate, nothing is natural, but what is fit and true, and can endure the teſt of reaſon. With him the feudal ſyſtem, and all its barbarous, tyrannical,

and

and ſuperſtitious appendages, is natural. With him, all the gaudy, cumbrous, fuſtian of " the " old Germanic, or Gothic cuſtumary" is natural, and all the idolatrous foppery and degrading ſuperſtition of the church of Rome are natural, alſo. Nay, with him, that deteſtable traffic in blood and murder—that barter of groans, and tortures, and long, long lingering deaths of ſhrieking anguiſh, the *Slave Trade*, is alſo natural. Nor do I doubt, that, with equal facility, and upon the very ſame principles, as he maintains the maſters and employers of this country to be the natural repreſentatives of the workmen they employ, he could prove, alſo, thoſe very humane, and very, very reſpectable beings, who, as they walk upon two legs, I ſhall continue to call men, by *courteſy*, (I mean the Weſt India Planters, and their Negro drivers) to be the natural repreſentatives of thoſe poor, haraſſed, half-ſtarved, whip-galled, miſerable ſlaves, whom they, alſo, *employ* in their farms and factories.

In ſhort, this champion of the privileged orders adopts, moſt unequivocally, the principle of this ſimilitude. Having aſſigned the excluſive privilege of opinion to the favoured four hundred thouſand—a mixed herd of nobles and gentles, placemen, penſioners and court-expectants, of bankers and merchants, manufacturers, lawyers, parſons

and phyſicians, warehouſemen and ſhop-keepers, pimps and king's meſſengers, fiddlers and auctioneers, with the included "twenty thouſand" petticoat allies—ladies of the court, and ladies of the town!—having ſecured this motley groupe (the favoured progeny of Means and Leiſure) in the excluſive, and unqueſtioned enjoyment of the rights of information and diſcuſſion, he proceeds to obſerve, that "the reſt, when feeble, "are the *objects* of protection!"—Objects of protection!—ſo are my lady's lap-dog and the Negro ſlave. It is eaſy to determine, which, of the two, *poliſhed ſenſibility* will ſhelter with the moſt anxious care!—Ye murky walls, and foul, ſtraw-littered floors of the plantation hoſpital! Ye full-crammed, noxious workhouſes of Britain—vile dens of tyrannic penury and putreſcence*! ſpeak—ſpeak, I charge ye (for that part of nature which ſhould be loud and eloquent, is ſpell-bound in panic apathy)—Speak: what is the *protection* which the feeble labourer, or the ſick Negro finds? and then refer for a compariſon to the down pillow of yon pampered, ſnarling cur, or the commodious chambers of the canine palace at *God-*

* There are ſome few, and but few exceptions, to this general deſcription. At any rate, however, a workhouſe is but a gaol; and, therefore, a fit receptacle only for thoſe paupers, whoſe infirmities make confinement neceſſary to their preſervation.

wood.

wood *.—But to return to the deſcription.—" The " reſt, when feeble, are the objects of protection— " when *ſtrong*, they are the MEANS OF FORCE †." So is the dray-horſe; and the poor aſs that drudges in yon ſand-cart! So are the bludgeon, and the piſtol, with which, under *exiſting circumſtances*, every man (at leaſt, every marked, obnoxious man) will do well to be provided, as preſervatives againſt aſſaſſination ‡. But foul befal the man, and foul befal the government, that conſiders the great maſs of the people as mere brute machines; inſenſate inſtruments of phyſical force, deprived of all *power*, and deſtitute of all *right* of reaſon, or information; doomed, like the dray-horſe, or the muſquet, to perform, mechanically, whatever taſk of drudgery, or murder, a few " counſellers and deliberators " may command! And yet, Mr. B.

* A ſplendid edifice, erected by the D. of Richmond for his dogs, with commodious kitchens, parlours, dining-rooms, bed-rooms, lying-in-rooms, pleaſure-ground for the morning ſun, pleaſure-ground for the evening ſun, baths, &c. &c.— N. B. It is a ſtrict rule at Godwood, that no ſervant be permitted to give a morſel of broken victuals either to mendicant traveller, or neighbouring peaſant. Poor women, who preſume to pick up withered ſticks from under the trees in the park, are taught, by a " ſevere and awful " adminiſtration of " juſtice," to reſpect the ſacred rights of property.

† Letters, p. 67.

‡ See an Appeal to Popular Opinion againſt Kidnapping and Murder: including a Narrative of the atrocious Outrages at Yarmouth, Lynn, and Wiſbech.—*Jordan.*

tells us, that " they who *affect* to conſider that " part of us" (to wit, nine-tenths of the adult population of the country) " in any other point " of view, *inſult while they cajole us**!"

Such, my fellow-citizens, is the language of inſolence itſelf, perſonified in the character of a penſioned proſtitute? Nine out of ten of the human race (it will, anon, be nineteen out of twenty) are born to be beaſts of burthen to the remaining tythe: to be hewers of wood, and drawers of water—to be expoſed to heat and cold, winds and waters, rocks and tempeſts, for theſe privileged maſters; and, finally, to be " liſt- " ed as ſoldiers for battle*," to defend, or to aggrandiſe a country, in which they have neither voice nor right. And he who dares to aſſert their claim to " any tolerable leiſure for diſcuſſion, or " means of information :"—he who dares to maintain their pretenſions to opinion, or title to be regarded " in any political view," as a part of " the people," is an hypocritical jacobin incendiary, revolts againſt the ſovereignty of wealth, and " inſults while he cajoles us!" Such is the language of a man to whom our government gives a yearly penſion of four thouſand pounds, for diſtracting the world with the ravings of bedlam, and the filthy loquacity of the ſtews, in

* Letters, p 67.

favour

favour of ariſtocratic deſpotiſm, and beating the tough hide of old Ziſca, " to animate Europe to " eternal battle *!"

But beware, Mr. Burke, and you, his hypocritical employers, how *ye* cajole and inſult *us* too far. Abuſes, when diſcovered, inſpire the ſober wiſh of peaceful and rational reform: but when wrong is added to wrong, and coercion to coercion; when remonſtrance is anſwered by the goad and the yoke, and inſult is heaped upon oppreſſion, reaſon may be overpowered, and madneſs may ſucceed; and the philanthropic few, who admoniſh in vain, may deplore the deſtiny from which they cannot preſerve you. In vain do you ſhudder at the cannibals† of Paris—in vain do you colour, with exaggerated horrors, the " tribunals of Maroon and Negro ſlaves, covered " with the blood of their maſters‡;" if, obſtinately vicious, inſtead of being warned, ye are irritated by the example.

I deplore, as you do, the " robberies and the " murders," of theſe poor wretches—the blind inſtruments of inſtinctive vengeance. But, I cannot, like you, forget by whom thoſe leſſons of

* Letter to a Noble Lord.

† The reader will, of courſe, give me credit, for uſing this word in a figurative ſenſe. Mr. B. in the very dotage of credulity, applies it literally.

‡ Letters, p. 123. Thoughts, p. 61.

murderous

murderous rapacity were taught. I cannot forget, that ſlavery itſelf is robbery and murder; and, that the maſter who falls by the bondſman's hand, is the victim of his own barbarity.

I am no apologiſt for the horrible maſſacres of revenge; whether perpetrated by negroes, by monarchs, or by mobs. I abhor revenge. Vengeance, Mr. Burke, with me is crime. All retroſpective principle is crime; and to its crime, adds folly. In your own ſort of language I ſhould ſay—we were *made* with our eyes in our foreheads, that we might look onward to the future, not linger upon that which can never be recalled. Give me *ſecurity for the future*, I will diſpenſe with what is called *juſtice for the paſt*. But we are not to expect whole nations (whether of Maroon negroes, or vaſſals of feudal tyranny) to become of a ſudden ſo entirely ſpeculative. Revenge, it cannot be concealed, is a rude inſtinct, common to all animated being, which nothing but deep reflection, and well digeſted principles can eradicate. It is an inſtinct, alſo, when it dares to ſhew itſelf, ſtrongeſt in the moſt feeble, fierceſt in the moſt ſubmiſſive, and moſt fruitful in the ſteril ſoil of ignorance. The bleak froſt of ſeverity nouriſhes it to wild luxuriance. It periſhes beneath the warm manure of kindneſs. It is a wild growth of nature, it is true: but it is fatally cheriſhed by authoritative example: and if tyrants will teach

bloody

bloody leſſons, it is unreaſonable in them to complain of the aptitude of their ſcholars. Add to which, Mr. B. this *deteſtable vice* is one of the *virtues* of the *ancient and venerable* part of that religion you ſo anxiouſly uphold. The maxim of forgiveneſs to enemies, is, comparatively, a *modern innovation*: which accounts for its being ſo ſeldom practiſed by governments or prieſts. "Eye for "eye, and tooth for tooth," will not ſatisfy them. Theirs are the dread inſtructions, "which, being "taught, return to plague the inventors." Theirs, indeed, too generally, are the crimes unprovoked: the crimes of revolutioniſts are only the crimes of revenge. Had the Maroons and negroes never been moſt wickedly enſlaved, their maſters had never been murdered. Had the chains of France been leſs galling, they had never fallen ſo heavy on the heads of French oppreſſors. To avoid their fate, let governors avoid their crimes. To render ſanguinary *revolutions* impoſſible, let them yield to temperate *reforms*. To avert a dreaded vengeance, let the provocations of injuſtice be inſtantly removed; and the padlock from the mouth of an injured people, be transferred to the lips of penſioned inſolence!

But the politician of Beaconsfield, "the doc-"tor of the conſtitution"—or rather the doctor's doctor, has found a ſhorter way.—"The cautery

"and

" and the knife" are more ſovereign than the emollient and the balm. Extermination (even of eighty thouſand men of talent and capacity) is more eaſy than reform. Deſolation itſelf is not to miniſterial ears " a word of ſuch ill ſound" as " change ;" and Jacobins and reformers are therefore to be ſubmitted to the " ſevere and " awful operation," in a manner that will expoſe " the crown" to no ſort of danger of again " re- " tiring diſgraced and defeated from its courts."

" Of theſe four hundred thouſand *political citi-* " *zens*," ſays he, " I look upon one-fifth, or about " eighty thouſand, to be *pure Jacobins* ; *utterly in-* " *capable of amendment* ; objects of eternal vigi- " lance," &c. " On theſe, no reaſon, no argu- " ment, no *example*, no *venerable authority*, can " have the ſlighteſt influence. They deſire"— What ? " A *change* ; and they will have it if they " can."—True : And they ought to have it ; and they muſt, or the nation is undone for ever. If all are Jacobins who wiſh for a change, Mr. B. moſt miſerably under-rates the Jacobins of this country. Some wiſh for a greater change, and others for a leſs. There are, I fear, almoſt as many different opinions, among reformers, as to the extent of that change, as there were among the allies about the objects of that ever to be renowned and glorious confederacy of kings, by being chief

trumpeter

trumpeter to which—or, more properly ſpeaking, drum-major (for we muſt not forget old Ziſca) Mr. Burke has accumulated ſo conſiderable a portion of ſpoil, at ſo ſmall an expence of danger. But, barring the idle terrors which ſtate jugglers keep ſo alertfully alive, by repeating, at due intervals, and with due ſolemnity, the cabaliſtic words, *French maſſacres! republicans and levellers! horrid atheiſts! dreadful anarchy! bloody regicides! cannibal philoſophy!* and the like, I believe there is ſcarcely a ſingle reflecting man, unconnected, by intereſt or expectation, with exiſting corruptions, who does not, in ſome degree, wiſh a change. But ſays Mr. B. "England has been happy; and "change is a word of ill ſound to happy ears*."—England *has been* happy!!!—Perhaps ſo. England was not always infeſted with ſuch a peſtiferous ſwarm of placemen and penſioners, boroughmongers and contractors, as, at this time, devour the harveſts, and blaſt the ſmiling verdure of the year. Will Mr. B. pretend to ſay, that England *is* happy now? Will he pretend to ſay, that even that ſmall portion, that tythe, which he calls "the Britiſh public," are happy at this time? And if they were, what

* Thoughts, p. 1.—In Rivington's edition this is omitted. A qualm of modeſty ſeems, unaccountably, to have ſeized the author, and this inſult to our feelings was ſtruck out. But, thanks to Mr. Owen! (honourable mention of him in the journals of political literature!) we have the firſt thoughts, as well as the after thoughts. Of the writings of Burke we can never have too much.

right has a tenth part to be happy at the expence of the miſery of all the reſt? But, can even theſe be called happy? Are thoſe middle claſſes (which we middling people are apt, ſo ſelfiſhly, and ſo wickedly, to conſider as the whole!)—are even they happy? Alas! alas! how diſmal the reverſe?

Ye tradeſmen, ye manufacturers, ye noiſeleſs proficients in the arts, the ſciences, and the gainful branches of learning (the bulk and maſs of all thoſe callings and profeſſions *nick-named* RESPECTABLE*) tell me—tell *the world*, can ye look in the innocent faces of your children, and, contemplating the proſpect before them, ſay, that ye are happy? Can ye look upon your own condition, your blighted proſpects, and your ſtinted comforts, and, even barring future proſpects, ſay ye are happy? Alas! how many of you are, at this very time, deſcending, and how rapidly, down the ladder of degradation! A few (I grant it) proſper. A few ſwell to uncontroulable pride, and incalculable affluence. The more is your diſaſter. To be, like Tantalus, in a lake of miſery, with the proſpect of abundance conſtantly before our eyes, and never taſte it, is to be doubly loſt. But what is the condition of the maſs?—*Your*

* Reſpect is not the attribute of property, calling, or condition. It belongs, in reality, to nothing but virtue; and to that which is a branch of virtue—well applied talents.

little

little maſs, I mean. As for *the great maſs*—it is trampled in the duſt; and is forgotten. How many of you have been obliged to relinquiſh your little country houſe, or country lodging?—ſweet recreations of health and pleaſure! which at once prolonged exiſtence, and decked it with a ruddier ſmile! From the tables of how many has the tax-gatherer ſnatched the cheering wine? How many, many a family, that once baſked in the inner, has been puſhed to the outer circles of this temperate zone? How many from theſe outer circles have been thruſt into the chill regions of penurious labour? And, how many thouſands, upon whoſe moderate toil the ſidelong ſun once caſt his cheering gleams, now ſhiver at the dark, bleak poles of comfort-leſs diſtreſs?

If, then, our happineſs be reduced to a mere "has been," this terrible *change*, is the burthen of *a dirge*, rather than a *word of omen*; and muſt impreſs us rather with plaintive than terrific ſenſations. We might, therefore, with ſtrict propriety diſmiſs the ſubject, in Mr. B's own ſtyle, by declaring that the objection "will not apply; "and put it out of court accordingly: ordering, "that ſo far as that goes, the counſel for exiſting "abuſes take nothing by his motion *."

But the counſel in this cauſe is a deep politi-

* Letters, p. 129.

cian. He can practice popular arts againſt the people. His motion was not made with any view to the deciſion of that high court of reaſon, to which he appealed, but for the ſake of the general impreſſion expected from the mere motion itſelf. Change is a word of ambiguous meaning; and, under certain circumſtances, the worſt conſtruction is ſure to be put upon every ambiguity. It ſhould be remembered, therefore, that *change*, *revolution*, and *reform*, are but modifications of the ſame idea: though the laſt, by eſtabliſhed courteſy, is the moſt unequivocally admitted in a favourable ſenſe. *Reform* is a *change*, or *revolution*, *from bad to good*. Every uſurpation, and every conceſſion, is a change. Every alteration of the law, the repeal of an old act, or the paſſing of a new one, is a change. The whole hiſtory of government is nothing but a record of changes, or revolutions, gradual or ſudden; and the worſt revolutions are thoſe that are never called ſo. In ſhort, abſtractedly conſidered, there is nothing terrible in change or revolution. Violence and cruelty are to be abhorred. Humanity is to be loved and cheriſhed. Firſt and greateſt of all virtues! parent of all bleſſings! fountain of all ſocial joys! it is to be wooed, and foſtered, and reverenced with the fondeſt care! to be claſped to the breaſt, and entwined with the very texture of the heart—only to be torn away with

with the laſt, deareſt fibre. But when violence and cruelty are eſtabliſhed—when they are ſurrounded by privileges, and fortified by power, revolution itſelf becomes humanity and juſtice.

The queſtion, then, is, what ſort of a change do we deſire? Does Mr. B. mean to ſay, that one-fifth of the people of that claſs which he regards as "the Britiſh public," *deſires a change* of tumult, ferocious anarchy and ſlaughter?—O woeful Britain! if this were indeed the caſe: for there would ſcarcely be a paper partition between thee and the flames of the moſt hideous deſolation. But if, by change, he means, as I do, redreſs of grievances, and reform of long-growing corruptions, I repeat it, not a fifth, but four-fifths of the thinking part of the community, do, in their hours of ſanity, when the tertian of alarm ſubſides, wiſh for ſuch a change: and when I look around on the condition of my country, and the ſcandalous abuſes of government, proud am I to be conſidered, among the diſtinguiſhed eighty thouſand, not the leaſt obnoxious to Mr. B. and his *new employers*.

After having thus indulged his indolence, in a little faint and dubious colouring, the artiſt, however, preſently returns to his *old daſhing ſtyle*. "If "they cannot have this change, which they de- "ſire, by Engliſh cabal," ſays he, "they will "make

make no ſort of ſcruple of having it by the ca-
" bal of France, into which already they are *vir-*
" *tually incorporated.*" Thus, *all reformers* are Jacobins; and all Jacobins are of the French faction, virtually incorporated with that nation, and willing to ſecure the change they wiſh by foreign interference.

As for *virtual incorporation*, or *virtual preſence*, whether in a *wafer*, or a *confederacy*, they are myſteries which, I profeſs, I do not underſtand. Mr. B. perhaps could explain the one, and ſome of our good allies might write commentaries on the other. But I am not curious about occult ſciences; and I ſhall only obſerve, that if the French republic derives no greater benefit from our *virtual incorporation* than the grand confederacy from the virtual co-operation of the Empreſs of Ruſſia's manifeſtoes, it would be moſt gratuitous prodigality in government to be at any further expence for ſpecial commiſſions, and trials for high treaſon. For my own part, at leaſt, I have no objection to avow all the incorporation I am conſcious of with French Jacobiniſm.

I do confeſs, that ſo long as I imagined it even poſſible for the republic to be overthrown, no proſpect was accompanied with equal anguiſh. For, notwithſtanding the many adventitious horrors which have clouded the revolution, I regarded it as a great and glorious effort for the

emancipation

emancipation and moral improvement of the human race. But the thought has long ceaſed to agitate my mind. The Republic ſtands upon a rock; and Æolus may blow till he cracks his cheeks, but all the blaſts of his eloquence will never ſhake it. We muſt have miracles; or all is ſafe. "The ſluices of heaven muſt be "opened, and the waters of the great deep be "broken up;" for nothing leſs than a general deluge can deſtroy it.

As for Engliſh reform by foreign cabal, I ſhall only obſerve, that I hold, with reſpect to England, the ſame doctrines that I held with reſpect to France. I deny Mr. B.'s law of vicinage altogether; and ſhall reply to his ſophiſms in another letter. In the mean time, I would have the reformers of all nations keep for ever in their minds the monitory remembrance, that hatred may be forced, but love cannot; that chains may be *impoſed*, but freedom muſt be *acquired*.--In other words, that no country can have freedom, which cannot obtain it for itſelf; and that *foreign interference can only, at beſt, produce a change of maſters* *.

* This maxim, however, applies only to thoſe nations in which foreign mercenaries are not employed by the government. It is no impeachment of the conduct of the Dutch. They were, already, under a foreign yoke. Their government coerced them by Britiſh and Pruſſian mercenaries; and they had no choice but that of accepting the aid of French fraternity.

But,

But, this is by the way. All I have to do, at preſent, with Mr. B.'s charge, is, to ſhew the point of view in which he regards, or pretends to regard, the opinions of eighty thouſand of thoſe people of Britain, who, by virtue of their pecuniary ſituations, *are licenced to think on politics*. This, together with what he ſays of the talents and capacities of theſe men, will form the firſt branch of what I ſhall venture to call *Burke's new ſyllogiſm of maſſacre*.

" I have a good opinion," ſays he, " of the ge-
" neral abilities of the Jacobins."—In his very laſt publication, they were a herd of " fools
" aſpiring to be knaves*;" and the reader cannot have forgotten his vehement declamations at the beginning of the conteſt with France, againſt
" the vileſt, the moſt deſpicable, the moſt igno-
" rant of mankind; who, unlike the Engliſh Re-
" volutioniſts of the laſt century—for they were
" men of genius and intelligence—that was a
" ſtruggle of talents for their natural aſcendency
" —a transfer of power, from the ariſtocracy of
" birth, to the ariſtocracy of mind; but theſe men,
" on the contrary, had overthrown *all* diſtinc-
" tions, and transferred dominion, not to the
" wiſdom and the intellect, but to the folly and
" ignorance of the nation†!" But now, " I

* Letter to a Noble Lord.

† I have not the ſpeech before me: but this, I know, was the ſtrain and ſentiment of that furious philippic.

" have

" have a good opinion of the general abilities " of Jacobins." Who knows, but that bye-and-by, he may take another turn, and entertain a good opinion of their principles? Change is with him no inconſiſtency. Mr. B. and the weather-cock, are only out of character when they are fixed. " Strong paſſions," ſays he, " awaken the " faculties. *They* ſuffer not a particle of the " man to be loſt. The ſpirit of enterpriſe gives " to this deſcription the full uſe of all their na- " tive energies *." And again, in his ſecond Letter †:—" It is a dreadful truth, but it is a " truth that cannot be concealed; in ability, in " dexterity, in the *diſtinctneſs of their views, the* " *Jacobins are our ſuperiors*. They ſaw the thing " right from the very beginning!!!" &c.—Such is the picture drawn by this ſublime politician of that " great and formidable minority" (not, gentle reader, the whig minority of the Houſe of Commons!) of whom he wiſhes to put the men of family and property in terror, that he may put them into *blood*. To complete the picture, in the true ſtyle and colouring of alarm, he adds, " I do " not know whether, if I aimed at the total over-

* Letters, p. 70. Thoughts, p. 20.

† Letters, p. 144. Thoughts, p. 87. Compare this with his picture (Let. p. 145. Thoughts, p. 89) of " the tribe of " vulgar politicians" that throng the courts of princes!!! and who can doubt the iſſue of the ſtruggle?

" throw of a kingdom, I ſhould wiſh to be en-
" cumbered with a larger body of partizans.
" They are more eaſily diſciplined and directed,
" than if the number were greater *." Nay, and ſo diſciplined, and ſo directed does he conceive us to be, that he aſcribes to us a ſort of omnipreſence, and ſupernatural power of metamorphoſis —" paſſing from place to place, with incredible
" velocity, and diverſifiying our character and de-
" ſcription, ſo as to be capable of mimicking the
" general voice! †"

And what has all this to do (you will naturally enquire) with the argument againſt a Regicide Peace? Will the government, by exhauſting the reſources of the nation, be better enabled to ſtruggle againſt ſuch a faction (admitting its exiſtence)? Will the increaſe of burthens, the beggary, miſery, and conſequent diſcontents, growing out of the prolongation of war, make ſuch a faction leſs formidable? (Though not anxious myſelf for peace, I argue the queſtion openly and fairly. In caſes ſo momentous, there ought to be no diſguiſe.) Would the unthinking, the deſperate, the fickle and the wavering, be the leſs likely to fall into the hands, and be rendered inſtrumental to the views of ſuch men, from the accumulating miſeries, which, from ſuch pro-

* Letters, p. 68. Thoughts, p. 18. † Ibid.

longation,

longation, muſt inevitably reſult? Mr. B. is not ſuch an ideot as to believe it. His hyperbolical ſtatement might, indeed, ſupernaturally account for a general *exclamation*, without admitting a general *deſire*, for peace: ſuppoſing, indeed, that ſuch *general* exclamation had been raiſed. But this I deny. The moderates (the patchwork-men—place-hunters, and dupes of place-hunters) wiſh for peace, I believe; and ſuch of the monied men as have no advantage from loans and contracts, or as dread the conſequences of a freſh loan: but as for the Jacobins—indeed, Mr. Burke, (maugre all your profound penetration) they are very indifferent about the matter: they know (as you do) that peace, under *exiſting circumſtances*, could only be a hollow truce*: that the over-burthened labourer would ſtill continue to be taxed for enormous ſums to be ſquandered in foreign intrigue, to diſturb the tranquillity, and irritate the government of France; and that "what now *ſtands for* a government" in England,

* Since this was written, I have ſeen a ſpirited and well-written pamphlet, "*Utrum Horum*: — The Government, *or* the Country," in which this idea is further purſued; and the diſtinction between a *real* peace, and a peace concluded by *our* preſent government, is ably marked. D. O'Brien—I obſerve, with pleaſure, he has not daubed his title-page either with *Mr.* or *Eſq.*—D. O'Bryen, and myſelf, differ upon ſome points—our habits, and, perhaps, our objects, are ſomewhat diſſimular: but different mediums do not prevent us from ſeeing the ſame great glaring truths.

(I mean Pitt and Hawkeſbury's diſcordant cabal) has injured the French Republic too outrageouſly ever to forgive it. In ſhort, they know that there is no peace for Europe, ſo long as the unnatural alliance between the funding ſyſtem and the borough-mongering ſyſtem laſts; and that, therefore, any thing (in how queſtionable a ſhape ſoever it may come) would be, ultimately, a bleſſing, that ſhould bring this unnatural alliance to the criſis of a divorce. Sooner or later, this criſis, I believe, muſt come: and when it does come, "Periſh, the Borough-mongers," I ſay, for one, "and let the public creditor be ſecured!"—In other words, let corruption be deſtroyed—let plunderers and ruffians be diſmiſſed from power, let penſions be aboliſhed, ſinecures be totally abrogated, and the ſalaries of all offices reduced to a level with the mere neceſſary expences of the table and the library, of a man of ſcience and public buſineſs: Let ſimplicity and virtue be ſubſtituted for oſtentatious debauchery; and thus let the peaſant and the manufacturer be redeemed from miſery; and, at the ſame time, the thouſands, and tens of thouſands of virtuous families, whoſe *well-earned competence* is now veſted in government ſecurities, be preſerved from hideous ruin. Thus it is, and only thus, that the joint object can be attained, and the jarring intereſts

of

of the ſtock-holder, and the productive labourer, be united.

But if Mr. B.'s extravagant picture of Britiſh Jacobiniſm has nothing to do with the argument on Regicide Peace, it has ſomething to do with that which is of infinitely more importance: it has ſomething to do with our palladium, Trial by Jury: it has ſomething to do with all the yet-remaining fences of our little, little liberty—with all that ſtands between the head of the patriot and the axe of miniſterial vengeance.

But take it not upon credit. Truſt not to my aſſertion. Read the book yourſelves—or rather the books: for the parts in which they differ, and the parts in which they agree, are equally important to the juſt diſplay of the temper and views with which they were compoſed. Conſider the whole. Compare together the reſpective parts; and if ever you execrate again the names of Robeſpierre and Marat, without glowing with ſuperior deteſtation for Edmund Burke, it is only, becauſe it is in the nature of man, that reaſon ſhould be the fool of imagination, and that guilt ſhould loſe its guiltineſs in our eyes, when impotence prevents the perpetration of its malice.

Hear, for example, his affected lamentations over " the total relaxation of all authority,"

" rity *," the " inefficiency of tribunals," the backwardneſs of whoſe " moſt eſſential members" (the juries, I ſuppoſe, he means) to execute the bloody mandates of a miniſter, is deſcribed, with inſidious obſcurity, as a " diſowning of the go- " vernment." See, alſo, his furious attack upon the Houſe of Lords, becauſe that " higheſt tri- " bunal of all," would not indulge his rhetorical ſpleen with the condemnation of Warren Haſtings. There was no evidence, it is true: no caſe made out. But what of that? Mr. Burke can have no idea of " the reaſon, and equity, and juſ- " tice," of that " ſevere and aweful—living law," to which he ſo pompouſly appeals, unleſs trial and condemnation are one and the ſame thing; and accuſation, ſentence, and execution follow each other with as mechanical a certitude as the concluſions of a mathematical problem reſult from its premiſes—Without this, it is " dead and " putrid; inſufficient to ſave the ſtate, but potent " to infect and to kill."

But " the very ſtorm and tempeſt of his rage," are reſerved for the *treaſonable* acquittals—for treaſon, it ſeems, it was, that we ſhould be acquitted. That Lords and Commons ſhould have joined together in votes of prejudication—that Miniſters

* Letters, p. 19, and 20. This is one of the additions, for the purpoſe of working up which to due ſublimity, the work has been kept ſix months in the preſs.

and

and Crown Lawyers ſhould have projected and planned ſuch elaborate proſecutions; and twiſted and twined, and diſtorted all law and common ſenſe, till the very ſtatutes of the realm, and the Engliſh language itſelf, were turned inſide out, and logic and juriſprudence walked topſy-turvy, like the captive king of the Antipodeans, in Chrononhotonthologos—that his own moſt ſublime and *inventive* genius ſhould have been employed in arranging, drawing out, garbelling and embelliſhing "Reports of Secret Committees*"—that Courts of Special Commiſſion ſhould have been adorned with ſuch pomp and circumſtance—Bedlam, Bridewell, and the ſtews, ſo ranſacked for collateral evidence, and nature's looſe analogies explored for moonſhine links of unconnected facts: that Judges, Counſel, and Witneſſes, ſhould have been ſo well choſen, and ſo well paid†, and Juries

ſo

* This, is believed to be one of the *important ſervices* for which Mr. B. received that penſion of 4000l. a year, which he ſo modeſtly aſſures us, "is no more than he deſerved!!"—*Letter to a Noble Lord.*

† All the witneſſes were not paid alike; or with equal good will. The honeſt fellows from Sheffield were diſmiſſed with the price of an outſide paſſage on the coach, and about 7s. for expences on a journey of 200 miles. My very valuable and lamented friend, the late John Stuart Taylor, of Norwich, when he applied to a certain gentleman in office, or Jack in office, which ever you pleaſe to call him, for thoſe fixed and regular expences, which the ſubpoenaing party always pays, to every profeſſional man, during the time he is withheld from

his

ſo carefully ſelected, with ſuch due proportions on each pannel, of contractors, police magiſtrates, and tradeſmen to the royal family*; and yet, after all, that we ſhould come off with our heads upon our ſhoulders, and " the CROWN retire diſ- " graced and defeated from ITS courts," with only the ſolitary, *ambiguous* conſolation of execut- ing one of its own ſpies—this

" Is grief too fierce for nerves like his to bear,
" And claims the horrors of a laſt deſpair!"

He raves till he foams again. Like a wounded elephant, his enemies having eſcaped, he turns his fury upon his friends—upon himſelf—upon thoſe very pavillions and edifices of ſtate he was armed and capariſoned to defend; and four dread pages† of ſplendid ruins, are covered over with froth and blood.

his buſineſs, was anſwered with ſurly inſolence—" Expences, " Sir—for ſuch a witneſs as you! Do you think it was for " this you were brought up to London? You were ex- " pected to give evidence on the part of the crown, not on " the part of the priſoner!!!"—When the Lynams, the Taylors, the Groveſes, the Timſes went for their *expences*, was there any demur??? No, they had ſaid all that was expected—and almoſt every word of it had been proved to be falſe.

* To the immortal honour of thoſe men—to the honour of our national character, this was not a ſufficient inducement to thoſe honeſt men to bring in a verdict for the crown againſt the evidence.

† Letters, p. 19 to 22.

" The

" The higheſt tribunal of all is deprived of all " dignity and efficiency."—" Public proſecutions " are become little better than ſchools for trea- " ſon ; of no uſe but to improve the dexterity of " *criminals*" [i. e. *reformers*] " in the myſtery of *eva-* " *ſion*," [i. e. *of avoiding the ſociety of perjured ſpies !*] " to ſhew with what complete impunity men " may conſpire againſt *the common* WEALTH," [that is to ſay, in plain Engliſh, againſt *the corruptions of a gang of borough-mongers—the* PLUNDER *of a hord of placemen and penſioners !*] " to ſhew " with what ſafety *aſſaſſins* may attempt its awful " head !"

There is a gradation, it ſeems, in *honourable obloquy :* but ſurely we are now at the ladder's top. Mr. Windham made us *white-waſhed felons* ; Lord Grenville *ſtained us with moral guilt* ; and Mr. B. has dubbed us ASSASSINS. It would be curious to know what epithet this *Gentleman ! ! !* would give to thoſe ruffians *(moſtly in the pay of Government)* who were concerned in the meditated, *attempted* maſſacres of Lynn and Yarmouth !—In the mean time, I wonder how *juries* reliſh theſe things. But it matters not. They are not to be uſed any more, I ſuppoſe, *on ſuch occaſions*.

Having exhauſted his ſtock of Newgate wit, the metaphorical Proteus now turns his hand to medicine and ſurgery, and cures low fevers with amputation and the cauſtic. It muſt be confeſſed,

however, that his *language* is ſufficiently ſcientific. " Whilſt the diſtempers of a *relaxed fibre prognoſti-* " *cate* and *prepare* all the *morbid force* of *convulſion* " in the body of the ſtate, the ſteadineſs of the " *phyſician* is over-powered," &c. " The *doctor* " of the conſtitution ſhrinks from his own *ope-* " *ration.* He doubts and queſtions the ſalutary " but critical terrors of the *cautery* and the *knife.*" The doctor thus diſgraced, anon he becomes a ſoldier, learns the Brunſwick march, and " takes " a poor credit even from defeat." Then again he is an eulogiſt; a politician; a lawyer; a reſurrection-man, dealing in rotten carcaſes; a " juriſt;" a letter-founder, and a printer's devil; an engroſſer of parchment rolls, and an engraver of brazen tablets: and all in one ſingle page.

And now he is a dancing maſter, whimſically enough employed in " *bowing* to the enemy " abroad," which, it is ſagaciouſly remarked, is not the way " to ſubdue the *conſpirator* *" who is breaking the fiddle " at home." Having diſplayed theſe harlequin tricks in his own perſon, he proceeds to try his dagger of lath upon other objects. In ten little lines " anarchy" is a rattleſnake; a " *focus,*" endowed with magnetic powers; a " venomous and blighting inſect," that

* *Conſpirator!* ſingular number!—" A man may conſpire with himſelf!!!"—*Chief Juſtice* EYRE.—*State Trials*, King *v.* J. Thelwall, *fifth day.*

" blaſts

" blaſts and ſhrivels, and burns up the promiſe of " the year," occaſions " ſalutary and beautiful " *inſtitutions* to *yield duſt and ſmut*," and turns " the " harveſt of the law to ſtubble." At laſt, to crown the whole, tired of agriculture and natural hiſtory, and having panted round the whole circle of metaphor, he returns, like a hare to the ſquat he ſtarted from, takes up his old profeſſion of phyſic again, and gives us an emetic of puſtles and blotches, and " eruptive diſeaſes," which " ſink in and re-appear by fits." The malady, however, which is now under his care, whatever it may be, has, ſomehow or other, *a converſable faculty*—a ſort of *intellectual* " *fuel*," which holds treaſonable correſpondence " with " the ſource of regicide," and cunningly " waits " for the favourable moment of a freer commu- " nication to exert and to encreaſe its force." This is really the moſt intelligent, artful, intriguing, philoſophiſing diſeaſe I ever heard of. What a loſs to the readers of " Medical Tranſ- " actions," that the doctor has not favoured us with its name, its diagnoſis, and the peculiar characteriſtics of its exterior ſymptoms.

Wonderful man! moſt incongruous, and moſt brilliant phenomenon of genius! how haſt thou the power to make even nonſenſe faſcinating, and give charms to ſheer malevolence! Thou art, indeed, a compound at once ſtrange and terrible:

but, it muſt be confeſſed, thou art an entertaining mongrel. Full of beauty, and of ferocity, as the *royal* beaſt of Bengal; and driven onward by the ſame blind impulſe of rage and ravin—thy hideous roar is ever prophetic of blood: But "the "tyger is frequently loſt in the ape;" and indignation is diſarmed by ſplendid abſurdity:—while the tricks and antics of a wild, extravagant, frantic imagination have a ſort of witching charm, that defies the ſober ſeverity of judgment, and occaſions even the abſurdity itſelf, to be accepted as a ſort of atonement for the depravity we ſhould elſe abhor!

But let us not forget—for if we ſhould, there are others who will remember, that theſe tropes, and metaphors, and allegories, however wild and incoherent in themſelves, all point to one determinate object—all lead to one concluſion: namely, that the eighty thouſand jacobins (more or leſs) who are ſo firmly grounded in the truth and purity of their ſentiments, that no ſophiſtical "reaſoning," no hackney "argument" of prejudice or corruption, "no example" of government ſpies caught in their own vile nooze, "no "venerable authority! can have the ſlighteſt in-"fluence upon them;" and whoſe conduct is ſo ſtrictly conſonant with benevolence and juſtice, that when the crown (that is to ſay the miniſter) brings

brings them before a jury, howſoever ſelected, and of whomſoever compoſed, it retires from its courts defeated and diſgraced—That theſe deteſtable jacobins—theſe eighty thouſand criminals, againſt whom no crime can be proved—theſe conſpirators, who never yet conſpired—theſe aſſaſſins, whoſe only dagger is reaſon, and whoſe only ſword is truth—the meridian ſun itſelf being their dark lanthorn, and publicity their only cloak—theſe are to be ſubmitted to the prompt execution of the cautery and the knife; to be cut and burnt away, like warts, from the eruptive body. All, all who dare to complain, though oppreſſion were heaped upon oppreſſion, " till it o'ertopp'd Olympus"—all, all who dare to wiſh for change, (though tyranny grew black as thickeſt night, and corruption ſtank in our very pottage,) all are to be ſwept away. Jurors (unleſs juries can be regulated by ſome new faſhion) muſt no more be truſted with ſuch conſpirators: for jurors are conſpirators themſelves —" the acquittal of the conſpirators is a proof " of the extent to which the conſpiracy had " ſpread *." Juries will not do: our preſent tribunals are not efficient. They were inſtituted

* Such was the audacious language of William Pitt. His mind ſeems pretty well diſpoſed for the adoption of *the cautery and the knife*. His *ſteadineſs* would not be much *overpowered by the operation.*

for

for the purpoſe of chaſtiſing criminal ACTS—they cannot reach OPINIONS with ſufficient certainty;—*but the* SWORD *can.* "Out the "word came; and it never went back *:" nor ever can get back. Mr. B. indeed ſoon repented that he had let it out; and endeavoured to recal it: but in vain. It had eſcaped into the hands of Mr. Owen; and by means of a fortunate quarrel, between the apoſtate politician and the apoſtate bookſeller, behold—we have it. It is before the world. It is in print. "The type "is black and legible;" and both "the *letter*," and the ſpirit are "*clear*."

"I have formerly heard," ſays he †, *with more ſurpriſe than "ſatisfaction*," that "opinions are "things out of human juriſdiction,"—that "you "can never extirpate opinion, without extir-"pating a whole nation." He then proceeds to argue both the practicability, and the propriety of this forcible extirpation; maintaining the juſtice of "war againſt opinion ‡," and even affirming, in round terms, "when I am told it is a war "of opinions, I am told it is the moſt important "of all wars §." He does not, however, neglect the opportunity of expoſing the inconſiſtency of his antagoniſts. I am glad he does not. I

* Letters, p. 171. † Thoughts p. 63.‡ Ibid. 64.
§ Thoughts, p. 66.

would

would not have the intemperance, or the injuſtice, of either party ſpared. All perſecution, from whatever quarter it come, (and I call all war upon opinion, all proſecution for opinion, perſecution) is equally deteſtable: nay, if the thing, in itſelf, is capable of aggravation, that aggravation it receives, when it is appealed to by the friends of liberty. Let prieſts and tyrants take ſhelter in their inquiſitions, their ſtar-chambers, and their courts of law, where their *blind* deity, with the two-edged ſword, uplifts her ſcales, in pageant mockery, but ſtrikes as power directs. We have a goddeſs of more perfect organ—far-ſeeing Reaſon, of ſteadier balance, and unweaponed hand; but, yet, of force that cannot fail of victory, if we have faith, and truſt in her omnipotence.

Why ſhould any advocate for freedom have loſt his temper, or his conſiſtency, on account of any nonſenſe which Mr. Reeves might chooſe, or be hired, to write, about the trunk, or the branches of a rotten tree? In the name of wonder, what can we wiſh for more, than that *ſuch talents* ſhould be employed in *ſuch a cauſe*. I, at leaſt, have never ſuſpected Mr. Reeves of being one, who, if the Thames were a fire, would know where to run for water to put out the flames. But if ever it ſhould pleaſe the gods to enable him to write any thing worth anſwering, let us hope that pen, ink, and paper will not be wanting. Write away then,

Juſtice

Juſtice Reeves, and ſupport your cauſe. Scalp headleſs wights with Grub-ſtreet "Tomahawks;" and indite new "Thoughts*" for men who never think. I, meanwhile, proceed to examine the arguments of your more potent coadjutor.

"As to the *mere matter of extirpation*," ſays he, "of all kinds of opinions, *whether right or wrong*, "without the extirpation of a people †"—O certainly: it is not neceſſary to extirpate the *whole* people: Cut but the throats of *that portion* of a people who hold the obnoxious opinion—*Saint Bartholomiſe* them—nay, that *informed, diſcuſſing* portion of them—that *awakened*, able, energetic band, ſuch as the proſcribed eighty thouſand of this country, over whom "NO *example*" (however terrible) "*no venerable authority* can have the ſlight-"eſt influence"—*Do but Bartholomiſe them*, and the buſineſs *appears* to be done. And this, ſays the Oracle of ariſtocratical abhorrence of maſſacre and cruelty—"this is a thing ſo very common, "that would be clouded and obſcured, rather than "illuſtrated, by examples."

Mr. B. was very much in the right to ſave himſelf from the confuſion, in which particular ſtatements would have involved him, by this round and general aſſertion; for certainly, if he had

* Thoughts on the Engliſh Government.

† Thoughts on the Regicide Peace, p. 64.

come

come to cloſe quarter with facts, none of the particular ſtatements would have anſwered his purpoſe: certainly the maſſacre of the proteſtants, by the *humane* and *politic* old deſpotiſm of France, would not: though for this our *ſerious* Machiavel (for the Italian did but jeſt) could, perhaps, aſſign a reaſon. The thing was not thoroughly done. It is true, that the *Grand Monarque* having determined to "exert a vigour beyond the law," and having given orders accordingly*, "there were "killed in the city of Paris, that day and the "next, above ten thouſand, whereof above five "hundred were barons, knights, and gentlemen, "who were purpoſely met together, from all parts, "to honour the king of Navar's marriage."—It is true, "Gaſper de Coligny, the famous admiral," (one of the leaders of the Hugonots) "was pulled "out of the ſtable, and cruelly abuſed by the fury "of the common people," (this was a royaliſt mob ---a mob hired, inſtigated, marſhalled by the *regular*, conſtituted government) "who deteſting his very "name, *tore* his head from his ſhoulders, cut off "his hands, and dragging him through the ſtreets "to the place of execution, left him hanging by

* See Engliſh Tranſlation of *Davila*, p. 374, 375, and 376, edit. 1647. See alſo for the horrible particulars, "Hiſ-"tory of the bloody Maſſacres, &c. in 1572" (extracted from "Thuanus's Hiſt. of his own times," and tranſlated.) Lond. 1674.

" one of his feet upon the gallows; and a few " days after" (theſe were royaliſt cannibals!)" they " ſet fire to it up n the ſame gallows, half burning " it, with barbarous rejoicings; their cruelty find- " ing no end, t ll two ſervants of the Mareſhal de " Momorancy ſtole away the relics of his miſera- " ble carcaſe, and buried them, ſecretly, at Chan- " tilly." It is true, alſo, that " the day before " this terrible execution, the king diſpatched " poſts into divers parts of the kingdom, com- " manding the governors of cities and provinces " to do the like."—It is true, that " on the ſame " night at Meaux, and the days enſuing at Or- " leans, Rouën, Bourges, Angiers, Thouloufe, " and many other places, but above all, at " *Lyons*, there was a moſt bloody ſlaughter of " the Hugonots, *without any reſpect of age or ſex*, " or quality of perſons." But it is true, alſo, that through the great extent, and out of the whole population of France, there were *only* forty thouſand men, women, and children put to the ſword. There ought to have been eighty thouſand, reaſoning, diſcourſing, enquiring adults, even if the population of France had only equalled that of Britain. Hence, perhaps, it was, that *Hugonot Jacobiniſm* and *Hugonot infidelity* (or *Hugonot hereſy*—for with *eſtabliſhed prieſts* they are *eſſentially* the ſame!) inſtead of being " extirpated" from " the vicinage of Europe," have been gaining ground

ground ever ſince, both in number of proſelytes, and extent of principle.

Neither will " the wars of Charles V. and his " ſucceſſors," againſt this ſame *Hugonotiſm*, better ſupport his cauſe ; as indeed he confeſſes : though at the ſame time he cautiouſly obſerves, that whether thoſe wars " might or might not" be juſtified, " is " a matter of hiſtorical criticiſm !" Nor yet will he be able to quote, among his " cloud of ex- " amples," the early perſecutions of the Chriſtian ſyſtem of innovation and reform : a ſyſtem which, whatever Mr. B.'s *mode of faith* may ſuggeſt, went much greater lengths, with reſpect to a very tender ſubject, than the wildeſt *Atheiſm* either of the French or Engliſh Jacobins. The primitive Chriſtians (as every ſcholar knows) both upheld and practiſed, not only *equality of rights*, but *community of goods :* (a wild and abſurd ſcheme, I confeſs ; and not practicable upon any *large ſcale :* but I ſpeak to the doctrinal and hiſtorical fact :) nor can the man who has ſeriouſly conſidered the eſſential doctrines of that religion, view, without contempt, the oſtentatious mockery of a modern congregation, who call it Chriſtianity to keep " the poor, the halt, and the blind," ſtanding, at due diſtance, in the aiſles, while the well-dreſſed claſſes are cloſeted up in pews, lined, elevated, and embelliſhed, according to the rank and ſtation of the occupants, liſtening to a drawler

in an awkward habit, and cooped up in a mahogany box, to ſoothe the pride of greatneſs with obſequious exhortations, and terrify the abject and oppreſſed into trembling ſubordination, and reverence for their *betters*. Edifices, thus *ſet out*, are Pagan theatres; not Chriſtian churches. What degree of perſecution this ſyſtem met with in Pagan countries, is a ſubject of ſo much controverſy among the learned, that I ſhall not venture to decide. However, that it was perſecuted in " that centre and focus of innovation," Judea, where it firſt broke out, is evident; and that with tolerable ſeverity. It was perſecuted. Chriſt became popular. His doctrines became popular. —How could doctrines fail of popularity, which contained ſo many elementary political truths, and vindicated, ſo directly, in many reſpects at leaſt, the Rights of Man? He did not ſpare corruptions, either in Church or State. He expoſed the doctrines and the practices of the prieſts and the ariſtocrats, the Phariſees and the Sadducees, the powerful, the wealthy, and the great. He collected the people together, in great numbers, and lectured them againſt exiſting abuſes; in the ſtreets, in the wilderneſs, in the fields, and on the neighbouring hills. The government was alarmed. They " ſought to deſtroy him;" and when they could not " lay hold of his words," they ſet gangs of ruffians upon him, to knock him on the

head,

head, with bludgeons and ſtones. But "he "eſcaped out of their hands, and got away." In the midſt of theſe perſecutions, the number of his proſelytes continually encreaſed; and ſome of the *great men* among the Jews (like the *great man* I had mentioned in the "Narrative of my arreſt and treatment*") thought, "that men who "had a heap of people running after them, "were beſt in a place of ſecurity." He was ſecured. A certain apoſtate (his name was neither *Edmund Burke*, *William Pitt*, nor *William Windham* —it was *Judas Iſcariot*) took it into his head to perſecute the doctrines he had formerly ſupported; betrayed the cauſe; and accepted a penſion for "his public ſervices." In ſhort, Jeſus Chriſt was crucified, as *Joſeph Gerrald* has been tranſported, for expoſing the corruption and degeneracy of the times, and preaching a great reform. But it was all in vain. Hang, tranſport, and crucify, as long as you pleaſe: the ſpirit of a great reformer, martyr'd for a glorious principle, will riſe again. The phœnix mind ſprings triumphant from the pyre; and the winds, that ſcatter the aſhes of the martyr, propagate the principles for which he fell.

Thus fared it with Chriſtianity. The perſecutions it ſuffered, by drawing attention to its doc-

* Tribune, vol. I. p. 89.

trines

trines (many of which, particularly in the ſtate of ſociety then prevailing, were excellently calculated to impreſs the general mind) contributed, more than all the tales of prophecies and miracles, with which it *became* incorporated, to ſpread the ſyſtem, not only through Judea, but through "all the ſurrounding vicinage." *It did continue to ſpread ſo long as perſecution continued; and never was overthrown till* POLITIC EMPERORS *(finding it a uſeful inſtrument of ambition)* ESTABLISHED THE NAME, AND DESTROYED THE PRINCIPLE.

But, ſays Mr. B. opinions may not only be forced; you may even force men into the forcible perſecution of their own opinions:—"inſtances enough may be furniſhed of people who "have enthuſiaſtically, and with force, propagated thoſe opinions, which, ſome time before, "they reſiſted with their blood*." True: but it is a truth which makes terribly againſt *one* part of his argument, and nothing for the other—for it tends to ſhew (if brought to the teſt of facts) the great advantages which new opinions have over the old, when driven to the iſſue of coercion. The proſelytizing army is always encreaſing; the army of eſtabliſhments always falling away. Many thouſands, in every long-continued ſtruggle, begin with "reſiſting opinions with their

* Thoughts, p. 64.

"blood,"

" blood," on account of their *novelty*, which they conclude with " propagating (even enthuſiaſti-" cally, and with force,") from a conviction of their *truth*. An Arnold, or a Dumourier, may be dragged from the retreats of infamy, to prove that the Champions of Liberty may be bought by its foes. But the examples are worth but little, in the ſcale of argument; and, I ſpeak it with glowing ſatisfaction, they are but few. As for the voluntary, and unbought recantations, they are all on the other ſide. In ſhort, " in the event " of a ſtruggle," ſettled governments may reſt almoſt aſſured, that they muſt conquer immediately, or not at all. It is, therefore, a ſerious thing, to bring matters to ſuch an iſſue.

I rather ſuppoſe, however, that Mr. B. had his eye upon examples of another kind; for ſpecimens of which, not to burthen the reader with quotations, eſpecially, as I have cited the paſſage in a former publication *; I refer to " Burnet's " Summary of Affairs before the Reſtoration †." There he will find *Lutherans*, *Catholics*, and *Calviniſts*—that is to ſay, Lutheran, Catholic, and Calviniſt *Princes*—Electors, Dukes, and Palatines, in abundance, changing, and re-changing their religion, as policy of ſtate directed; and propagating, with *force*, at one time, " thoſe opinions

* Pol. Lect. p. 55. *On Prof. for Pol. Opinion.*

† Own Times, vol. I. p. 14. fol. edit.

" which,

" which, before, they reſiſted with *their* blood:" —that is to ſay, with the blood which they regarded as *their property*—the blood of their ſubjects: the fact being, that, like princes and ſtateſmen in general, they had no ſettled opinion of any kind; except, that whatever tended to gratify their uſurping ambition, was to be purſued; and that every thing was to be " judged by moral " prudence" (of which they were ſole umpires) " and not by any abſtract principle of right *."

But, continues the advocate of extirpation— " Rarely *have ever* great changes in opinion taken " place, without the application of force, more " or leſs †." True, Mr. B.—and for this plain reaſon—governments have rarely wanted ſuch counſellors as yourſelf, to perſuade them to drive the queſtion to that iſſue. Eſtabliſhments (however pure in the outſet) have never failed, in proceſs of time, to be infected with innumerable corruptions. Theſe the governors have an intereſt in perpetuating; and, indeed, for the ſake of that intereſt, the corruptions have been generally introduced. To them, " the beauty of all Conſtitu- " tions conſiſts in thoſe very corruptions of which " others complain ‡;" for it is by the latter, not

* Thoughts, p. 64. † Ibid. p. 65.

‡ Speeches of the Right Hon. W. Pitt, and Lord Mornington, on the Motion for a Committee to take into conſideration the Petition of the Friends of the People.

the

the former, that their ambition is flattered, their rapacity indulged, their patronage extended, and places and penſions heaped upon themſelves, their families, and dependants. Theſe corruptions are therefore artfully confounded, and incorporated, with the original inſtitutions; and the inſtitutions themſelves, under one pretence or other, are artfully abrogated by their pretended ſupporters; till, at laſt, the whole is infected; and nothing but corruption remains. The enormity of the evil produces complaint. Remonſtrance, rejected and deſpiſed, provokes to keener diſcuſſion, and more bold enquiry. New theories and new ſyſtems are ſtarted, more conſonant with the nature of man, and principles of juſtice; and the old, corrupted, disjointed, patch-works of obſolete inſtitution, and new-fangled uſurpation, are attacked with all the ſtrength of argument, and the ardour of principled conviction. But corruption cannot ſtand the teſt of enquiry. It ſhrinks from the galling probe of truth. Its ſtrength conſiſts in "the morbid force of convulſion," not in the conſcious energies of temperate health. It therefore flies from argument, and appeals to force: leaving, to the proſcribed reformers, only the ſad alternative of periſhing in thouſands, according to the example of the Hugonots, and the advice of Burke and Windham, by "a vigour beyond the "law," or of repelling force by force, with

death or victory on their banners, and on their hearts.

Such has been the caſe in many a nation—in Genoa—in Switzerland—in Holland *twice*—in America; and ſuch was the caſe in France. Opinion had grown till it had burſt its chains; circumſtances concurred that gave opinion weight: the court ſeemed to yield; but coercion was prepared. Monopolies (gigantic in wickedneſs) were planned and executed, to put the ſubſiſtence of the people in the power of their oppreſſors; and freſh maſſacres were reſolved, and organiſed: but the project tranſpired: force was repelled by force: *Lambeſque* was diſcomfited; the people flew to arms; the Baſtille was taken; *Broglio* fled; and Paris eſcaped a ſecond feaſt of Saint Bartholomew. But ſtill there were *ſilver-headed* traitors to the cauſe of man, penſioned profligates, at the ear of royalty, adviſing coercion —from within, or from without—it mattered not. A foreign combination produced a foreign war; and Louis XVI, who had ſworn to defend the *conſtitution of new opinions*, kept up (as *Mallet du Pan*, his confidential agent confeſſes, in his *Correſpondance Politique pour Servir a l'Hiſtoir)* a ſecret intercourſe with the deſpots who had leagued for its deſtruction. But ſurely the "great changes "in opinion," reſulting from "the application

"of

" of force," in theſe inſtances, are not much calculated to encourage eſtabliſhed governments to a repetition of the experiment.

I do not mean to aſſert, that coercion has no influence over opinion. I have not forgotten that the deſpotiſms of China, and Japan (deſpotiſms in which that prompt conductor and diſſeminator of intellect, the preſs, is yet unknown*) did, by nipping Chriſtianity in the very bud (long before it was eighty thouſand—perhaps before it was eight hundred ſtrong) exterminate that religion: or, more properly, prevent it from taking root. Neither do I forget the prophet of Mecca and his armed apoſtles; who carried conviction on the ſabre's edge, propounding circumciſion or death. But Mahomet, and his Arabs, alſo, war againſt Mr. B.: for here *the new opinion prevailed.* And why did the new opinion prevail? The anſwer is a dreadful warning to old eſtabliſhments not to be eager for conteſts of blood. The new opinion prevailed, becauſe there is an incalculable diſtance between the energy and enthuſiaſm of a new conviction, and the ſcience and mechaniſm of ancient habits: becauſe it is the former, alone, that rouſes the full force of intellect and valour,

* The Chineſe have an art of printing. But it conſiſts in the uſe of logographic characters, inſtead of an alphabet: it is, accordingly, a labour of many years to learn to read their language.

and " ſuffers not a particle of the man to be " loſt :" becauſe the old opinion depends upon rotine ; the new upon intrepidity and merit : becauſe in one, the maſs feel that they are nothing ; in the other, they may be every thing they dare : becauſe the eſtabliſhment takes its leaders, and muſt take them, by a *ſort of lottery*, from the court cabal ; the innovation *ſelects* them " from the ranks." In one caſe commands are conferred, that laurels may be reaped : in the other, laurels are reaped that commands may be obtained. Such, " in the event of a ſtruggle," are the advantages in favour of the innovating army : and Mr. B. ſees, and has acknowledged them in all their ſtrength.

Yet, ſtill this champion of old ſyſtems maintains, that new opinions may be, and ought to be extirpated by force. They ought to be extirpated for three reaſons. 1. Becauſe " *Opinion* " *is the rudder of human action* *." Granted. Granted, alſo, that " *as the opinion is wiſe or fooliſh*, " *vicious or moral, the cauſe of action is noxious or ſa-* " *lutary*." But who is to judge of this wiſdom or this folly—of this vice or this morality ? *Government !* ſays Mr. B. I ſay no : for that thing called government, if there be corruption in the ſtate, is, of neceſſity, the focus of that corruption : That thing called government, is compoſed of a privi-

* Thoughts, p. 65.

leged

leged few, who always may have, and, the hiſtory of the world aſſures us, frequently have had, an intereſt diametrically oppoſite to that of the ſtate. Was the court of Tarquin, of Nero, of Caligula, Domitian, or Hiliagabalus, fit to be conſulted for ſtandards of moral and intellectual taſte? Did they not mow down all virtue and all wiſdom, and propagate the moſt deteſtable vices, and the moſt atrocious barbariſm? Are the governments of Japan, of Morocco, of Algiers, fit to be conſulted as oracles upon theſe ſubjects? If they are not, none are: and for this reaſon, If the government were ten times blacker than all that I have inſtanced, it would ſay that it was pure; and the fouler it was, the more dangerous to deny the dictum.

How then is it to be decided? *By precedent!* you ſay—No; for precedent is infinitely diverſified. All things may be ſupported by precedent; and all condemned. It would, therefore, revert to governments to decide what precedents were good, and what were bad; and all my former objections recur—*By antiquity and eſtabliſhed uſage!* No; that would be to proſcribe all improvement—for all improvement is change of eſtabliſhed uſage. That would be to make the weakneſs and ſimplicity of childhood a ſtandard for the vigour and intelligence of maturity; and to prohibit all the advantages of experience. As Lord Bacon

Bacon obſerves, in this reſpect, *we, who live now, are, in reality, the ancients ; they are the younger generations that have paſſed before.*

Every thing uſeful to man has reſulted from this great principle. Every improvement, every invention, is an innovation, reſting upon the ſubſtantial data—that, by having all the experience of our anceſtors, with the addition of our own, we are wiſer than they ; and have a right, not only to imitate, like apes, but to improve—to alter—to chooſe, and to change, as men.

And is political ſcience, alone, upon whoſe improvement depend the happineſs, and the lives of millions, and the creation, as it were, of new worlds of population, whoſe embryons are now periſhing in the dark and comfortleſs chaos of devouring deſpotiſm—Is political ſcience alone to be an exception to the rule, and never to be breeched in manhood, becauſe it has formerly been encumbered with ſwathing-bands and long coats ? Certainly ; and, for this obvious reaſon, that the nurſes, who hold the leading ſtrings, have a profit in its weakneſs ; and muſt loſe their places, and their perquiſites, by ſuch a change. The caſe of governments, and of arts and ſciences, in this reſpect, are ſaid to be eſſentially different ; but the difference conſiſts in this alone : and if we had a government of tanners, and a prieſthood of ſawyers, I have no doubt that it would be high

treaſon

treaſon to dreſs a hide after a new faſhion, and blaſphemy to invent machines for ſplitting timber.

2. "*It has ever been the great, primary object of ſpeculative and doctrinal philoſophy, to regulate opinion.*" Certainly, and this object has always been, and of neceſſity muſt be, moſt effectually anſwered when opinion is moſt free; as indeed the very terms, "ſpeculative and doctrinal "philoſophy," when uſed in any ſenſe of approbation, take for granted. Every body knows that *philoſophy* means the *love of wiſdom*; and that to *ſpeculate* is to *conjecture, and pry, and enquire, with a view to the diſcovery of truths as yet unknown.* So that ſpeculative philoſophy evidently means *the love of that wiſdom which conſiſts in making enquiries and conjectures, with a view to the diſcovery of new truths*; while *doctrinal* philoſophy, or the philoſophy of *teaching*, muſt of neceſſity mean *that love of wiſdom which diſplays itſelf in imparting to mankind the truths which, in the proceſs of our conjectures and enquiries we may have diſcovered.* Now how can we ſpeculate without the liberty of ſpeculation? How can truths, hitherto unknown, be diſcovered, if we are not at liberty to conjecture and enquire?—And how can new truths be taught, if the philoſopher is not at liberty to communicate what his conjectures and enquiries have led him to regard as true? In ſhort, how can

there

there be any ſuch thing as " ſpeculative and doc-
" trinal philoſophy," if opinion is not left un-
ſhackled? It is not by coercion, but by diſcuſſion, that opinion is to be regulated, and the deſirable effects of morality and good conduct are to be obtained. But,

3. " *It is the great object of political philoſophy to promote that* [*opinion*] *which is ſound.*" Certainly, it is the duty of the political philoſopher, and of every philoſopher, by every motive of reaſon, and every opportunity of diſcuſſion, to promote whatever appears to him to be ſound. But the diſpoſition to decide between ſoundneſs and unſoundneſs by the faggot and the axe, comes not from the ſchools of philoſophy, but from thoſe of theological contention. What follows, therefore, " *and to* EXTIRPATE *what is miſchievous, and* " *which directly tends to render men bad* CITIZENS " *in the community, and miſchievous neighbours out of* " *it,*" is a ſophiſm both in terms and ſubſtance. It is a ſophiſm in ſubſtance, in as much as the ſtatement being general, vague, and hypothetical, furniſhes no juſt foundation for the particular concluſion meant to be inferred. It is a ſophiſm in terms, in as much as the phraſe, " extirpating what is " miſchievous," being ſpoken in reference to the antecedent " political philoſophy," demands aſſent only to the propriety of extirpating the ſuppoſed miſchievous opinion by philoſophical means—

that

that is to ſay, by means of reaſon, or ſetting one opinion againſt another; while the whole tenor of the argument would apply this aſſent, not to extirpation by philoſophy, but by the ſword. —In this ſenſe of the word, therefore, I deny the propoſition: a propoſition, indeed, which abſolutely begs the queſtion; and affirms the very point it pretends to argue. I, on the other hand, affirm, that political philoſophy has no right (according to Mr. B.'s jargon) to extirpate, by force, any opinion whatever:—no, not even "the opi-"nion, that it is a man's duty to take from me "my goods, and to kill me if I reſiſt him." The ſophiſt who ſhould propound ſuch a doctrine, would be eaſily confuted. [To ſay, that he could not, is to admit that he is right; or to affirm, that falſehood is more convincing than truth: a dictum that deſtroys all morals.] He who ſhould *act* upon the doctrine, would, undoubtedly, be hanged. But ſo long as indolence, or fear, reſtrains him from action, *the opinion*, however abſurd, is perfectly harmleſs; and ſociety ought to be ſatisfied. It is ſufficient for the *law*, that we fear the *gallows*: Our friends and companions, it is true, the guardians of our intereſts, and the inſtructors of our children, we would ſeek among men who act upon more generous principles.

As for pulling down governments—in addition to the preceding arguments, I ſhall only add, that *no man* can pull down a government. But when,

not a Man, but a *People*, wills a grand renovation, to feel the *will* is alſo to be conſcious of the power: and, when the will and the power co-operate, ſophiſts may ſtring ſyllogiſms, like beads upon a roſiary; but while they are reaſoning, the thing is done.

Fortunately for mankind, this will is not lightly inſpired. It is not to be produced by declamations or logic. The ſpeculative few will have their preferences, their theories, and their projected improvements. Sir Thomas Moore had his Eutopia; and Hume, himſelf, ſketched a ſort of ground-plot for the French Republic: but to the maſs, even of thoſe who have ſome "tolerable "leiſure for diſcuſſion, and ſome means of infor-"mation," (ſo long as their grievances are not very galling) that which *is* will generally appear to be beſt, merely becauſe it *is*; and becauſe that ſpirit of nationality, which belongs to the whole ſpecies, occaſions us to imbibe, with our very nutriment, a prejudice in favour of our national inſtitutions. Nay, even the ſpeculative few, themſelves, from their very love of ſpeculation, till rouſed by ſome extraordinary provocative, prefer the very eſtabliſhments they diſapprove, to the dangers, and the trouble of a change.—Hume's Commonwealth ſlept for ſixty years, and the Eutopia for whole centuries, on the ſhelves of the learned; and even the popular language

of

of Thomas Paine would not have provoked any very alarming diſcuſſion, if the general *condition* of mankind had not pre-diſpoſed them to exclaim—*We are wretched!—Let us enquire the cauſe!*

In ſhort, in all the pages of hiſtory I have peruſed, there is not a ſingle inſtance (and moſt aſſuredly I have not forgotten France) of a great, popular revolution taking place, till grinding, and long-continued oppreſſion, had rendered it abſolutely neceſſary:—till groaning Nature called for the dire relief.

It is not, therefore, by the extermination of eighty thouſand mal-contents and theoretical reformers, but by the alleviation of burthens, and the reſtoration of equal juſtice, that ſuch revolutions are to be avoided. It is not by the perſecution of *new opinions*, but by the reform of *old abuſes*, that contentment can be reſtored, and tranquillity preſerved to a ſtate; and governors ſecured from the terrors of retributive juſtice.

But, ſays Mr. B. I do not mean to perſecute all *new doctrines*. "Theological opinions," for example, "whether ſound or erroneous, do not go "directly to the well-being of ſocial, of civil, or "of politic ſociety." [If I were diſpoſed to give a clue to one ſort of perſecution, while I reprobate another, I could mention ſome theological opinions which appear to me, at leaſt, to go more directly to the deſtruction of all ſocial, moral, and

political virtue, than any thing of which Atheiſm itſelf was ever accuſed. " If I were the Deity," ſays Plutarch, who, by the way, was himſelf a prieſt—but he was, alſo, a philoſopher—a moral philoſopher !—" If I were the Deity, I would ra- " ther that men ſhould deny my exiſtence, " than ſay, that I was cruel, jealous, laſcivious, " or revengeful*."] The theological dogmatiſts, he continues, " did not preach vices or crimes." [How, Mr. B.—did they not preach the cruſade? Did they not preach murder, aſſaſſination, poiſoning, *depoſition of Kings*, the axe, the halter, and the faggot? And did they not practiſe what they preached?—But I forget myſelf—With the ſingle exception of *depoſing kings*, all that I have objected, inſtead of vices and crimes, are virtues, in Mr. B.'s *politico-moral* code. Nay, even ſuch depoſition itſelf, provided the power be transferred only to the privileged bodies, and feudal proprietories of the " old Germanic or Gothic cuſtumary," may be perfectly innocent, and even praiſe-worthy: for " indeed, the force and form of the inſtitution, " called States, continued, in *greater perfection*, in " thoſe republican communities (in which the " claſſes, orders, and diſtinctions, ſuch as before " ſubſiſted, or nearly ſuch, were ſtill left) than un- " der monarchies †."] " The parties," ſays he (the

* I quote from memory: but I know, that in ſentiment, I am correct.

† Letters, p. 111.

religioniſts)

religioniſts) " diſputed on the beſt means of pro-
" moting virtue, religion, and morals." And what do the Atheiſt and the Chriſtian diſpute about?—Why, whether religion is, or is not, the beſt inſtrument for promoting morals and virtue*. Men may differ upon this point, as well as upon the queſtion, of which ſort of religion (from the Egyptian faith, in calves and onions, to the orthodox metaphyſician's, in an incomprehenſible, immaterial, triune Deity) and yet both parties may be good members of ſociety. Do you try our lives by our opinions, or our opinions by our lives? Neither would be juſt: for man is an incongruous animal. But ſurely, the latter were the more candid: and, upon this foundation, I would be bound to bring Atheiſts into court, before whom the pious, impetuous, hireling apoſtate of Beaconsfield muſt hide his head in confuſion.

Opinions certainly have their tendencies with reſpect to moral character. But opinions are multitudinous. They proceed not from any one common ſtock. They ſpring up from many a wildly ſcattered ſeed. They bloſſom on innumerable ſtems. Deteſted, therefore, be the bigotry that condemns the whole ſoil, on account of one rank weed: that, from a particular doctrine, however erroneous, would argue the immorality of a general character!

* They diſpute, alſo, whether religion be true or falſe. But with this abſtraction, the politician has nothing to do.

But

But " is there no diſtinction between an in-" nocent and moral liberty," and opinions that are " the direct highway to every crime and " every vice?"—Muſt government " either throw " the bridle on the neck of headlong nature, or " tie it up for ever to the poſt*?" The ſophiſm is ſtated with moſt plauſible ſubtilety; and the ſimile is truely faſcinating: and when mankind ſhall acknowledge themſelves to be horſes—or that their governments are created for the expreſs purpoſe of riding them, then will it ſtrictly apply: then will it be right, that opinion ſhould be laſhed round the ſtation-poſt, till it is broken-in to the taſte of the rider. But ſo long as men and their governors are animals of the ſame order—ſo long as the great body of the people have a *common weal*, and that little corporation called Government, a *particular* one—ſo long as rulers have an intereſt, and betray an inclination, to conſider every thing as " an innocent and " moral liberty," which tends to pamper their ambition and rapacity, or encreaſe their power; and to repreſent all opinion inconſiſtent with their views, and hoſtile to their corrupt and deſpotic pride, as " the down-hill way to every crime " and every vice"—ſo long (that is to ſay, as long as political ſociety exiſts) will it be much more dangerous to the peace and welfare of the univerſe, to give the reins to that dread War-Horſe,

* Thoughts p. 66.

Conſtituted

Conſtituted Power—*whoſe neck is clothed with thunder, the glory of whoſe noſtrils is terrible, and who ſwalloweth the ground with fierceneſs and rage*, than to throw them looſe on the neck of the headlong colt Opinion, who, though he may ſnort, and curvet, and frolic through a thouſand extravagancies, will never, unleſs cruelly laſhed and goaded, commit any ſerious depredations, or do irreparable miſchief, either to himſelf or others.

This metaphor is, however, an important part of Mr. Burke's ſtatement; inaſmuch, as it proves, that his obſervations on the forcible extirpation of opinion, are intended to apply, not only to the foreign war, but, alſo, to the *Domeſtic Enemy*. Here, then, the argument, as far as relates to the developement of the mind and object of the writer, is complete—And thus it ſtands:

There are, in this country, " eighty thouſand " Jacobins, utterly incapable of amendment, over " whom no argument, no example, no vene- " rable authority, can have the ſlighteſt influ- " ence."

Theſe Jacobins have been tried, in the perſons of their ſuppoſed leaders; but " the tribunals " have been found inefficient;" the Juries, (by finding them " Not Guilty") have " diſowned the " government;" and " public proſecutions have " become mere ſchools of treaſon."

But

But opinions, if they cannot otherwiſe be checked, ought to be " extirpated by force :" the practicability of which may be proved " by a " cloud of examples."

Ergo—Eighty thouſand Jacobins are to be *forcibly* got rid of, at any rate ; " by the cauſtic " and the knife ;" by fire and ſword—by mock trial, without Juries to " diſown the govern- " ment,"—or by the murderous tumults of Lynn and Yarmouth bludgeon-men.

Such, my fellow-citizens! are the propoſitions and denunciations of the confidential hireling of a court, which yet fills the world with ſenſeleſs howlings againſt cannibal philoſophy, and affected exaggerations of revolutionary maſſacres!!! And to ſhew you that the inſinuations of Mr. B. are not raſhly, or unadviſedly made—to ſhew you the object of his inſinuations—and that theſe hints do actually, and *bona fide*, come from the governing powers, for the purpoſe of preparing the public mind for ſome freſh member of " that *previouſly di-* " *geſted plan, or ſeries of meaſures*," hinted at in the memorable debates of the laſt ſeſſion ; eſſential parts of the language of theſe pamphlets—important branches of this *ſyllogiſm of maſſacre*, are inceſſantly propounded by all the members and dependants of the government ; no opportunity is neglected of inſulting and reprobating the Juries who were guilty of the *deplored* acquittal ; the

circumſtance

circumſtance is openly connected with every motion and propoſition for encreaſing the military force; and Mr. Pitt (even ſince theſe ſheets have been at the preſs) in a debate (*Oct.* 31.) upon that very ſubject, affirms, that, notwithſtanding the iſſue of the trials, nine-tenths of the nation are convinced of our guilt. The inference is plain. It is a commentary (a tremendous commentary, coming from ſuch a quarter) on the intricate, yet not obſcure text of the arch-apoſtate to Ariſtocratic moderation! The ordinary phyſic of the ſtate cannot cure the diſeaſe; even extraordinary potions have been adminiſtered without effect; and as ſoon as the body politic (that is to ſay, the body of "political citizens,"—the privileged "four hundred thouſand,") can be properly prepared for the operation, recourſe muſt be had to "the cautery and the knife."

If this is not ſufficient to open your eyes, the laſt trumpet alone can awaken you. If this is not ſufficient to rouſe you to freſh vigilance, freſh exertion, cloſer intercourſe, and intrepid unanimity, ye are dead—ye are loſt, not only "in the "oblivious pool," but

> "In bottomleſs perdition; there to dwell
> "In adamantine chains."

Think, I conjure you: What is the proſpect held out to you?—For yourſelves—unqualified

 ſubmiſſion,

ſubmiſſion, or the prompt and deſtroying vengeance of ſome new mode of legalized maſſacre, or military execution:—for your children—the tombſtones of progenitors, who, though born to a degree of freedom, which they were bound to improve, and had no right to alienate, yet relinquiſhed the patrimony, with criminal ſupineneſs, and left to them, for their inheritance, beggary, and accumulating chains!

Rouſe, then, once more, to the inveſtigation of your rights: for, if ye will be ignorant, ye muſt be ſlaves. Truſt not your hopes to a blind fatality. Repoſe not in the indolent expectation, that the corruption of the ſyſtem will work its own cure. That corruption will, I believe, inevitably deſtroy itſelf: But the deſtruction of the tyranny is not, of neceſſity, the emancipation of the ſlave. Almoſt all are tyrants when they have the power: and the being, or the nation, that knows not how to maintain its freedom, when one yoke is broken, will find that another is prepared. Even if a continuation of the war, or the *winding-up* of a peace, ſhould bring affairs to a criſis—If, as is not unlikely, ere the cloſe of this century of ambition, uſurpation, and carnage, prodigal expenditure ſhould come to open bankruptcy, and the obſtinate infatuation of courtly pride, ſhould bring, at once, to their cataſtrophe,

a ſyſtem

a ſyſtem of horrors and a miniſtry of crimes; how ſhall ye be aſſured of benefitting by the event?—How ſhall ye ſecure yourſelves from new modes of corruption, and new ſyſtems of oppreſſion? How, but by vigilent diſcuſſion, and well-grounded principles?

Awake, then, once more, to the important enquiry. Compare what ye are with what ye have a right to be. Compare your powers and your faculties with your condition: the bounty of nature with your ſcanty enjoyments, and unſatisfied wants: the wealth reſulting from your productive labour, and the abject wretchedneſs of your general ſtate. Compare theſe things, and conſider well the cauſes. Trace them to their ſources, in the nature of ſome, and the corruptions of other, of thoſe very inſtitutions of the old Germanic, or Gothic cuſtumary, at the proſpect of whoſe approaching overthrow, the volcanic imagination of Burke pours out ſuch deluges of flame and ſmoke. Contraſt the gloomy intricacy of theſe oppreſſive ſyſtems—theſe antique temples of fraud and violence, with the ſimple plans of reaſon, and of nature; and learn what to avoid, and what to purſue.

In the furtherance of this great enquiry, deſpiſe not the warnings, nor reject the aſſiſtance of a friend, whoſe ſincerity, at leaſt, has been, more than once, tried in the balance, and has not

been wanting; and who ſtill, unſubdued by perſecutions, unawed by the daggers of aſſaſſins, unchilled by the cold neglect of an unſocial world, and forgetful of his own misfortunes, and his own perſonal cares, incorporates himſelf with the public, and with the warm enthuſiaſm of conviction, proceeds to advocate the cauſe of man againſt the uſurpations of eſtabliſhments.

Among the vindicators of theſe abuſes, the moſt formidable, aſſuredly, is Edmund Burke:—nay, he is the only one who, in any literary point of view, can be regarded as formidable at all: for the talents of this country are, generally ſpeaking, pure: they have not been debauched by court favour, nor rendered dependant by the liberal patronage of an adminiſtration of Mecænaſes and Medici. In brilliancy of imagination, extent of general knowlege, and richneſs and verſatility of talents, Mr. B. is, however, by himſelf a hoſt: though, at the ſame time, ſuch a hoſt as no champion of reaſon, of an inductive mind, and an enthuſiaſtic impreſſion of truth, need be afraid to attack. Armed with theſe advantages, and theſe alone, I appear once more in the liſt; and, not conſcious of any diſgrace in a former ſkirmiſh, proceed to cloſer and more decided conflict. He has ſtated what he calls his principles: mine ſhall be ſtated ſtill more explicitly. I ſhall demonſtrate the miſery produced by

by his feudal inſtitutions; and ſhall endeavour to diſplay the ſocial and moral advantages, the improved felicity and extended intellect, which would reſult from the more ſimple and equitable ſyſtems dictated by the laws, and by the rights of nature.

In the pamphlet, or rather pamphlets, I am replying to, there are three important objects of diſcuſſion. 1. The ſpirit of Jacobiniſm, in this country; and the manner in which it ought to be diſpoſed of, or extirpated. 2. The excellency of the old eſtabliſhed ſyſtems of government, as now adminiſtered, and the folly, wickedneſs, and profligacy of attempting to ſhake them, either by ſudden or progreſſive change. 3. The juſtice and propriety of the preſent war; the capability of this country to purſue it, till what is affectedly ſtyled regicide and atheiſm, by eſtabliſhment, ſhall be utterly deſtroyed; and the virtue, the wiſdom, and even the neceſſity of ſtaking our national exiſtence upon that iſſue.

Of theſe, the firſt only (which, though artfully incorporated with the reſt, forms, in reality, a diſtinct ſubject) is particularly examined, in this letter; to which I have given entirely a controverſial form; as the nature of Mr. B's. attack, in reality, neceſſitated me to do. The other two belong to the compariſon of the reſpective ſyſtems.

I ſhall,

I ſhall, therefore, in the following letters, proceed to a ſort of ſyſtematical developement of the rights of nature, and genuine objects of ſocial inſtitution; and ſhall, of courſe, controvert the axioms and declamations of the arch-champion of feudal barbariſm (which he calls poliſhed ſociety) as they fall in with the reſpective heads: and ſhall thus endeavour to preſent, in living colours, the contracted pictures of the uſurping eſtabliſhments, which court ſycophants would have you worſhip, and thoſe natural and inalienable rights, againſt which they entertain ſuch inveterate abhorrence.

END OF LETTER I.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THERE is a claſs of Readers to whom it may, perhaps, appear neceſſary to apologize for ſomewhat of a different temper exhibited towards Mr. B. in the preſent pamphlet, from that which has been admitted, on all hands, to have diſtinguiſhed my Anſwer to his former Letter. But the apology muſt be ſought in the publications of my antagoniſt himſelf. If I have become more warm, it is becauſe the ſentiments of Mr. B. have become more atrocious. His former attack was upon individuals: this is an outrage upon human nature: and he who can ſeek excuſes to palliate the enormous profligacy of a wretch, who would extirpate opinions by the ſword, and devote eighty thouſand of his fellow-citizens to judicial, or military maſſacre, muſt be deficient in that ardent benevolence, which, while it pants for the happineſs of man, cannot but deteſt the ſanguinary ferocity that yelps for wholeſale carnage. Some, however, may think, that I am not without a ſenſe of perſonal intereſt, to ſtir me, on this occaſion. Perhaps it may be ſo: But I am not, at the ſame time, without my conſolations. If the government ſhould act upon the advice of Mr. B. my eyes will not be curſed with the ſight of thoſe horrors that muſt inevitably enſue: Mine will be the glory, and the comparative felicity, of being one of the firſt victims.

Beaufort Buildings, 5 *Nov.* 1796

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